



## SUMMARY REPORT

### 14th MEETING OF THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE

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

*Hybrid (7 November 2023), on site (8 November 2023)*

**Chair (1):** Mr Klaus Berend, Director Food Safety, Sustainability and Innovation, DG SANTE

**European Commission and EU bodies (9):** DG SANTE, ENV, AGRI, RTD, JRC, ESTAT, European Environment Agency (EEA), European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)

**Member States represented (23):** AT, BE, BG, CZ, DK, EL, EE, FI, FR, DE, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, SI, ES

**Private sector organisations (39):** BEUC (the European Consumer Organisation), BOROUME, COPA COGECA (COPA COGECA- The European Voice of Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives), CTC (Clean Technology Centre ((Munster Technological University)), Consorzio Bestack, DUH (Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.), ECSLA (European Cold Storage and Logistics Association), EFFPA (European Former Foodstuff Processors Association), EuroCommerce (European organisation representing the Retail and Wholesale sector), EuroCoop (the European Community of Consumer Co-operatives), EUPPA (European Potato Processors' Association), Europatat (European Potato Trade Association), FEBA (European Food Banks Federation), FoodCloud, FoodServiceEurope, FOODWIN (Food Waste Innovation Network), Freshfel Europe, EUCOFEL (European Fruit and Vegetables Trade Association), Azti Foundation (Fundación AZTI - AZTI Fundazioa), HOTREC (Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe), HUA (Harokopio University), HFBA (Hungarian Food Bank Association), Independent Retail Europe, IFWC (International Food Waste Coalition), Last Minute Market, Les Restos du Coeur, MATVETT-NORSUS-NOFIMA CONSORTIUM, Rabobank, Regal Normandie, SWF (Stop Wasting Food Movement), Too Good To Go, Venturis Horeca, WUR (Wageningen University & Research), WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Program), World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM), Zero Waste Scotland.

**Other public organisations (5):** OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), EESC (The European Economic and Social Committee), COR (European Committee of the Regions)

**Observers (1):** Norway.

## **EU Platform on FLW meeting 7 November**

### **1. Introduction**

**The Chair** opened the meeting by welcoming participants and introducing the agenda of the meeting.

### **2. Global developments: update by Liz Goodwin, Senior Fellow and Director, Food Loss and Waste, World Resources Institute and exchange with members ([PDF](#))**

**World Resources Institute (WRI)** provided an update on global developments on food loss and waste and the findings from the Champions 12.3 2023 annual progress report towards SDG Target 12.3, showing that global progress by companies and governments was slower than required. WRI highlighted the progress achieved on regional and international levels, mentioning in particular the European Commission proposal on the setting of binding food waste reduction targets, which represented a major step in international efforts to reduce food loss and waste. As part of the global 10x20x30 initiative, a growing number of **companies** had already achieved significant food loss and waste reductions through adoption of the ‘Target-Measure-Act’ approach. However, more companies need to pursue this approach and scale their impact by engaging their suppliers, as well as providing them with technical and financial assistance. WRI emphasised the need for **governments** to make food loss and waste a priority in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national pathways. WRI noted that there was a need to improve management practices to reduce on-farm and near-farm losses and to encourage farmers to work with governments, companies, and financiers to put in place low-carbon storage technologies. WRI encouraged Platform members to engage consumers with behaviour change campaigns, practical solutions and leverage nudging techniques to support food waste reduction. There is a need for financial institutions to support investments in food loss and waste programmes. WRI further informed of its work on a new philanthropy roadmap to be announced at COP28.

### **3. International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFLOW): update by FAO/UNEP/ European Commission and exchange with members ([PDF](#))**

**FAO** and **UNEP** were designated to lead observance of the 4<sup>th</sup> IDAFLOW, with this year’s theme focussed on actions needed to transform agri-food systems. FAO informed of hundreds of events convened worldwide to mark the international day, including the hybrid global event hosted by FAO and UNEP in Rome. On the day, FAO launched its food loss application designed to enable crowdsourcing of information from farmers to help analyse where and why food losses take place at farm level and find concrete solutions. UNEP informed members about the challenge #EveryPlateCounts, launched with the participation of the Goodwill Ambassador Massimo Bottura, inviting participants to create and share recipes that can be made with leftovers. UNEP emphasised the importance of stronger consumer education and policies, better cold chain management and boosting data collection in order to reach our common targets. Both FAO and UNEP indicated that there was increased awareness and interest around the world in engaging in reduction of food loss and waste as well as growing publicity on the topic.

**The Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)** informed about the European Commission’s activities to mark IDAFLOW, in particular, the special edition of the [Hub newsletter](#) and the [communication kit](#) to help actors communicate on the day. On this occasion, the Statistical Office of the EU (Eurostat) published the second round of EU-wide food waste data reported by Member States.

**The Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry** inquired as to the actions undertaken at European and global levels to support consumer behavioural change. **UNEP** indicated that it hosted a series of workshops for regional food waste working groups, with one focused on how to put in place effective consumer behavioural change programmes. **DG SANTE** informed of the European Consumer Food Waste Forum's [‘best practice’ compendium](#), published on 29 June, and ongoing work by the Joint Research Centre to develop related dissemination tools and organise a public event.

#### **4. OECD stocktaking exercise on food loss and waste policies ([PDF](#))**

**OECD** presented its ongoing stocktaking exercise on food loss and waste policies, aiming to build comparable policy information across OECD and partner economies and identify good policy practices. Based on replies of OECD members to a questionnaire on food loss and waste policies, OECD intends to present a draft paper in May 2024 to member countries, including presentation of case studies and policy recommendations, with publication of the final paper foreseen for IDAFLW 2024.

#### **5. Update on EU food waste monitoring (2021 data) and the European Commission legislative proposal on food waste reduction targets: presentation by the European Commission. Exchange with members on how the EU Platform on FLW can support Member States in achieving the future targets**

**Eurostat** presented ([PDF](#)) the EU food waste data for 2021, published in September 2023, and informed that publication of data from Member States who had not yet reported their data was foreseen for March 2024. Eurostat encouraged those Member States who had not yet reported to do so and recalled that the annual deadline for reporting data on food waste is 30 June.

**WRAP** enquired whether the EU data allowed for the detection of a trend towards reduction in food waste levels. Eurostat explained that this was not yet the case, as a more accurate measurement of progress made in reducing food waste can be done over a four-year period, as the EU legislation obliged Member States to conduct more detailed studies every four years.

**DG SANTE** provided an overview ([PDF](#)) of the food waste related amendments proposed to the Waste Framework Directive (WFD), which included measures to be taken by Member States in order to reach the future legally binding targets. DG SANTE informed members of the state-of-play of the negotiations on the proposal and the views of co-legislators as well as the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee.

From a food security perspective, **UNEP** highlighted the need to consider the high nutritional value of inedible or unavoidable food parts and the potential to reintegrate these parts in the human food supply chain through upcycling or by diverting inedible food surplus to animal feed, where safe to do so (an idea also backed by **Europatat** and **Norsus**). **UNEP** also pointed to the need to quantify the total food waste (consider all food waste fractions) and then estimate the edible fraction which differs across different countries and cultures. **Harokopio University** and **Norsus** highlighted that some inedible fractions of food from households would be difficult to valorise and questioned the feasibility of achieving the EU targets at this stage of the supply chain. The **Chair** replied that while there was still margin to improve measurement methodologies and reporting on the different fractions of food waste, it was important for the targets to cover all fractions. Replying to a question from **IFWC**, **DG SANTE** explained that Member States could report on the edible fraction of food waste on a voluntary basis, however few had done so.

Referring to Belgium's role as the incoming Presidency to the Council of the EU, **the Public Waste Agency of Flanders** explained that Belgium will make all efforts to advance progress on the adoption of the revised Waste Framework Directive, aiming to achieve a general approach in Council in June

2024. The agency also informed members about the Presidency's [Open Food Conference](#) taking place in March 2024.

The **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia** inquired about the way in which the targets in the legislative proposal were expressed and possible consequences in case a Member State does not achieve them. SANTE explained that the reduction targets were expressed per capita for retail and consumption. Regarding possible consequences for not achieving the targets, DG SANTE informed that the European Commission could take action against the Member States by means of infringement proceedings and each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The legislative proposal offers Member States the flexibility to choose the best measures to achieve the targets.

**European Environment Agency (EEA)** ([PDF](#)) presented its role as an independent EU agency that aims to provide data on the environment to inform policy makers and the work of the European Environment Information and Observation Network involving 38 countries. EEA is mandated to publish every two years a report reviewing progress of Member States' waste prevention programmes, with the upcoming report focusing on food waste prevention programmes scheduled for 2025. EEA provided the preliminary findings from a mapping of food waste prevention actions and strategies in Member States, conducted in 2023. A short discussion followed on the separate collection of food waste at household level and its positive effects on preventing waste behaviours, with **WRAP** informing of studies in the UK. **DK** suggested that food waste may increase if households could not compost anymore.

**Wageningen University & Research (WUR)** commented on the importance of sharing data and information to advance progress in food waste reduction across the EU and informed members about an international conference dedicated to this topic taking place in the Netherlands on 18-19 June 2024, organised by WUR and Food Waste Free United and with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands. The event will focus on concrete actions and building coalitions between different stakeholders.

**The Chair** closed the meeting by thanking all presenters and participants for their contributions and invited participants present in Brussels to the networking event.

## Platform meeting 8 November

### 1. Introduction

**The Chair** opened the meeting by welcoming participants and introducing the agenda of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, focusing on concrete actions taken to prevent food waste in Member States and ways to accelerate progress towards the future EU food waste reduction targets. The agenda also included an update on the work of the EU Platform on FLW and its sub-groups and on related projects and policy work by the European Commission.

### 2. Possible pathways to proposed EU targets: presentation by Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and WRAP ([PDF](#))

The speakers provided a state-of-play of food waste prevention actions in the EU and progress made by governments and companies. They highlighted key factors to success such as applying the "Target-Measure-Act" approach for food waste prevention interventions and invited Platform members to follow certain 'pathways' for impact. The speakers described the following 'pathways' and mentioned supporting examples: advancing voluntary agreements, behavioural change campaigns, relevant regional support and exchange and cities and food policy approaches. Finally, speakers considered ways for overcoming systemic barriers and called for integrated policy measures and strengthened collaboration and sharing of knowledge between all actors.

**The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland** inquired about possible links with bioenergy targets and whether there were processes in place that ensure the correct application of the waste hierarchy. **DG SANTE** confirmed being aware of the issue of energy market fluctuations and impacts on the application of the food use hierarchy and was discussing with colleagues across the Commission's services about ways to address this. The Waste Framework Directive calls on all Member States to provide incentives for the application of the waste hierarchy.

The **International Food Waste Coalition** pointed to the importance of identifying the environmental, social and economic impacts of food waste prevention actions as well understanding the impacts of national initiatives. **WUR** replied that the interventions carried out in the Netherlands had positive benefits on other sustainability targets (e.g. reducing packaging, the nutrient transition) and highlighted the high potential for positive social impacts of redistribution and donation activities. Dutch companies substantiated the impact of their efforts and reported it in their Science Based Targets initiative or in their Corporate Sustainability Reporting and were setting internal programmes to reduce food waste for employees. **WUR** then referred to the results of the "Food Waste Free Week" initiative in the Netherlands, which reached 7 million people and engaged 35% of the Dutch consumers in its activities. **WRAP** emphasised the business case for food waste reduction and the importance of measurement to understand the different impacts of actions and of voluntary agreements to keep track of progress made over time. **WRAP** also noted that companies were increasingly integrating food loss and waste reduction in their marketing strategies, which helped to raise consumers' awareness.

**Venturis Horeca** inquired about ways to ensure the quality and reliability of data provided by the companies regarding the reduction of food waste and to avoid greenwashing. **WRAP** replied that private partnerships and voluntary agreements provided an opportunity to receive the data and look at their origin and time series, and that data were often evaluated by an independent third party.

### 3. Perspectives of Member States (I): presentations and exchange with members

Several Member States were invited to present their food waste prevention actions, their achievements, governance aspects, current gaps, future steps as well as data on their food waste levels. Below are the main takeaways (the full information is available in the slides):

- **The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland** ([PDF](#)) presented the monitoring results to track progress towards its target to halve food waste by 2030. To achieve this target in the different sectors, a national roadmap with six thematic areas had been designed as part of the national waste management plan. The Ministry emphasised that accelerating the progress towards SDG 12.3 required target-oriented cross-sector work across government services and presented a mapping of the services involved and their areas of responsibility.
- **The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany** ([PDF](#)) explained that Germany set the target to halve food waste at each stage of the food supply chain by 2030 and referred to the latest data available on food waste levels (from 2020). Germany had put in place a national strategy for food waste reduction which included sectoral voluntary agreements and a consumer-oriented programme “Too good for the bin” covering a range of different activities.

The President of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region and representative in the **Committee of the Regions** referred to activities to reduce food loss and waste in the region and expressed support for the European Commission’s legislative proposal on food waste reduction targets, highlighting the key role of regional actions to shape sustainable food policies.

**The Ministry of Agriculture from Portugal** inquired about how other Member States measured food waste and about the impacts of national campaigns targeting consumers. While Finland used the common EU measurement methodology, in Germany a uniform measurement method had been developed and applied to all sectors, based on data from environmental statistics. Both countries carried out national consumer awareness actions, mentioning the annual food waste week in Finland and the “Too good for the bin” national campaign in Germany.

**Venturis Horeca** asked about the public institution coordinating food loss and waste actions in Member States. **The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland** replied that there was no single leading public institution on the issue, while the **Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany** confirmed being the coordinating authority at national level.

**The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands** expressed concerns that the European Commission’s legally binding targets can give an impression to companies, which had committed to a 50% reduction target under SDG Target 12.3, that countries had lowered ambitions. The **Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany** commented that in its understanding Member States can set more ambitious national targets and expressed hope that the EU targets would be adopted soon. **DG SANTE** confirmed that this understanding was correct – the proposed targets should be understood as minimum targets.

### 4. Perspectives of Member States (II): presentations and exchange with members

The main takeaways from the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of exchanges is below (the full information is available in the slides):

- **The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France** ([PDF](#)) gave a detailed description of the public authorities involved in food waste prevention and their respective competencies. France had adopted national targets to halve food waste by 2025 in collective catering and retail, and by 2030 for the other sectors. France had put in place a national pact against food waste engaging relevant actors across the food supply chain and adopted specific

legislation in the areas of food donation, measurement and diagnosis. There was on-going work on a national food, nutrition and climate strategy, where food waste prevention will play a key role.

- **The National Food Chain Safety Office of Hungary** ([PDF](#)) explained that it focused on actions to prevent consumer food waste, presenting the progress of the project Wasteless (the national food waste prevention programme of Hungary). The project included a number of activities such as a school programme, international and national networking and collaboration activities, awareness raising campaigns and the publication of a zero-waste recipe book. Household food waste is measured in Hungary according to the common EU measurement methodology, distinguishing between edible and inedible fractions.
- **The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Spain** ([PDF](#)) presented the national 'More food, less waste' strategy to quantify food waste in households and raise consumer awareness of the issue. Since 2020, annual data indicated a reduction of food waste at consumer level in Spain.

Following the presentations, there was a discussion on the food waste measurement methodologies applied by countries:

- In **France**, food waste data from food services are based on estimates from national waste statistics and are collected through surveys or through the government tool "My canteen" (where food businesses can input their data directly; initiative to be expanded in 2024). (question by **IFWC**)
- **Spain** considers indicators to calculate the percentages of food discarded before and after cooking and with the help of the national household quantification panels, they identified which ingredients were thrown away most (question by **IFWC**).
- **Hungary** follows the FUSIONS methodology to quantify food waste in households, using a sample of households and pre- and post-measurement questionnaires. Replying to a question raised by **Venturis Horeca**, the main reasons for food waste in Hungarian school canteens were found to be related to the quality of food and food preferences of children. National authorities established a mobile laboratory to test the quality of food in school canteens; based on their reporting, new catering contracts are put in place. **The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland explained** that the national Finnish guidelines for school meals also address food waste.

The **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia** asked about the financing opportunities for awareness campaigns and whether there were examples of campaigns targeting university students. The **National Food Chain Safety Office of Hungary** replied that students were invited to take part in measurement actions and universities give presentations on the topic. The **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Spain** replied that the ministry participated in university courses and noted a widespread concern among young people for sustainability in general, however, there were no specific awareness campaigns targeting university students.

**Boroume** asked France about a tool for mass catering for the public sector, which allowed children and their parents to reserve school meals. **The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France** highlighted that it was important to determine the effect of reserving meals on food waste reduction, informing that the results of the project will be published in February 2024.

## 5. Platform sub-groups: update by co-chairs and discussion with members

Platform members that co-chair the Platform's different sub-groups presented an overview of their work since the last Platform plenary meeting held in October 2022.

### Sub-group on Food loss and waste monitoring ([PDF](#))

**Venturis Horeca** informed about the ongoing work on a report on challenges and solutions to monitor food waste in the food services and hospitality sector, which will be shared as a draft with members for their review. **FAO** presented the main takeaways from the sub-group meeting, highlighting case studies on food loss measurement in the Basque country and Sweden and updated members on international reporting for the Food Loss Index. **WUR** presented an overview of food waste monitoring actions taken by the private sector across the food supply chain, describing challenges and opportunities for each sector.

### Sub-group on Action & implementation ([PDF](#))

**WUR** updated members on the work on the Voluntary Agreements report, planned for adoption by the Platform in 2024. **EFFPA** presented the main topics for discussion for the sub-group in 2023, which covered former foodstuff processing, the role of animal feed in reducing food waste and food waste actions in the context of bioeconomy. Sub-group members discussed the practical implementation of the food use hierarchy across the EU, as food waste was increasingly used for biofuels instead of other higher value uses.

### Sub-group on Consumer food waste prevention ([PDF](#))

**DG SANTE** informed about the joint meeting with the European Consumer Food Waste Forum in February 2023, which focused on gathering Platform members' views on the Forum's compendium of best practices and tools to help stakeholders take effective action to reduce consumer food waste.

### Sub-group on Date marking and food waste ([PDF](#))

**The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands** informed members about the upcoming joint meeting of the date marking and consumer food waste prevention subgroups in December 2023, focusing on improving understanding the use of date marking to support consumer behavioural change and date marking practices in the food supply chain to avoid food waste.

### Sub-group on Food donation ([PDF](#))

**FEBA** informed about the joint meeting in November 2022 with members of FEBA's EU Working Group and the study visit to the Bruxelles-Brabant Food Bank. During the visit, the Food Bank showcased how Belgian food banks used the new possibility in the hygiene legislation allowing freezing meat at retail under certain conditions. **Restos du Coeur** informed of the following sub-group meeting on 28 November 2023, where members would discuss the possibility to donate fish brought to land through the EU landing obligation as well as VAT on food donations.

**WRAP** requested information on the amount of food redistributed across the EU and trends over the last three years. **FEBA** replied that as regards its members, overall, there had been a decrease in quantities of donated food, especially by retailers, which may be due to retailers' efforts to reduce food waste at their level. Data from FEBA members could be further consolidated for a representative overview of the situation in Europe. **Restos du Coeur** reported a significant decrease in donations in France, especially by supermarkets, leading to an increased collaboration to recover surplus food directly from farmers and food producers.



In closing the agenda point, **DG SANTE** presented the already identified co-chairs for 2024 and called for volunteers to co-chair the subgroup on Date marking in 2024.

## **6. Supporting food waste prevention in the EU: updates from the European Commission and exchange with members**

The **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** ([PDF](#)) presented the European Consumer Food Waste Forum's compendium of tools, best practices and recommendations to reduce consumer food waste, published in July 2023. The main recommendations of the Forum were available in short leaflets for [schools](#), [food businesses](#) and [policymakers](#). Work was on-going to create online tools and video tutorials to facilitate the use of the compendium by all stakeholders. JRC informed that a public event will take place on 5 June 2024 to disseminate the resources, present the tools developed, and provide practical training and advice to all actors seeking to take action to prevent consumer food waste. Finally, JRC announced the [COP28 webinar](#) "Reducing consumer food waste, protecting the planet", scheduled on 8 December 2023.

The **Directorate-General Environment (DG ENV)** presented the state of play on the proposal for the revision of EU legislation on packaging and packaging waste. The proposed changes included the prohibition of single-use packaging for specific types of fruits and vegetables below 1.5 kilos at retail level. DG ENV clarified that exemptions would be granted if there was a demonstrated need to avoid water loss or microbiological hazards or physical shocks. Work was ongoing to clarify the scope of the ban. **The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland** asked whether there will be an evaluation once the legislation comes into force to ensure that the prohibition of packaging of certain foods did not generate more food waste. **DG ENV** confirmed that a thorough evaluation will follow and there would be strict review clauses from co-legislators regarding food safety and food waste.

**The Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI)** ([PDF](#)) presented the changes introduced by the revised regulation on marketing standards for fruits and vegetables and the expected impacts on food losses and food waste. These extend the exemptions for several types of products from compliance with the basic general marketing standard; exempt products intended for donation from complying with any of the 11 specific marketing standards and remove the requirement to present bananas in clusters of at least four.

**DG SANTE** ([PDF](#)) provided an update on potential measures for sustainable public procurement that could be included in a proposal for a framework for a Union sustainable food system. SANTE mentioned the EU green public procurement criteria for food, catering services and vending machines, which include measures to prevent food waste. SANTE also informed about the state of play of the EU Code of Conduct on responsible food business and marketing practices and commitments taken by companies to reduce food loss and waste in their operations.

The **Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (RTD)** ([PDF](#)) presented the [Horizon Europe call](#) "Preventing and reducing food waste to reduce environmental impacts" to help reach the 2030 climate targets. The call is open until 22 February 2024 with an indicative budget of 9 million euros. RTD ([PDF](#)) also presented the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership under Horizon Europe, which aims to collectively develop and implement an EU-wide committed research and innovation partnership to accelerate the transition towards healthy diets that are safe and sustainably produced and consumed in EU and global food systems.

**DG SANTE** ([PDF](#)) provided an overview of the Single Market Programme grants to support actions in food waste prevention by both Member States and other stakeholders. DG SANTE expects to launch new grants for stakeholders in 2024 and 2026 and for Member States on an annual basis (in 2024, 2025 etc.). **The Chair** encouraged all members to apply for the future grants.

**The Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation of Sweden** informed of a project to improve national data and capacity for the EU reporting on food waste, funded under the Single Market Programme grants launched in 2022.

## **7. Conclusions and wrap-up by the Chair**

**The Chair** thanked the members for productive discussions and reflections on how to further support Member State in their progress to reach the food waste targets. The Chair encouraged participants to continue sharing ideas, initiatives, and utilise available tools including the EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub.