



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food Safety, Sustainability, and Innovation
Farm to Fork

SUMMARY REPORT

15th MEETING OF THE EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

Hybrid (19 June 2024)

s-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands

Chair: Mr Klaus Berend, Director Food Safety, Sustainability and Innovation, DG SANTE

European Commission and EU bodies (8): 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 (37): BEUC (the European Consumer Organisation), BOROUME, COPA (European Farmers), COGECA (European 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 Restaurants 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): NO

The 15th meeting of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste was held in the context of the [International conference “Towards halving food waste in Europe”](#) on 18 and 19 June 2024, at CHV Noordkade Veghel, the Netherlands. Information about the conference can be found at the end of this summary report, in a separate annex.

1. Introduction

The King’s Commissioner in the province of Noord-Brabant, Ms Ina Adema, welcomed participants and informed about the upcoming “Verspringsreienweg” event, taking place between 9-15 September. This initiative will offer an opportunity to highlight the importance of reducing food waste and using food more efficiently to consumers, businesses and policymakers.

The **Chair** opened the meeting, presented the agenda and announced a few recent developments:

- The Commission had launched the [Toolkit to reduce consumer food waste](#) which gathers video tutorials, digital tools and other useful materials to support all actors in designing, implementing and evaluating food waste reduction actions. It is based on the work of the European Consumer Food Waste Forum project and some of the materials are translated into various EU languages. The toolkit was launched in the context of a [public event](#) called “Let’s reduce consumer food waste! Solutions from the European Consumer Food Waste Forum”, which took place on 5 June 2024 in Brussels.
- The Commission, in cooperation with HaDEA (EU Health and Digital Agency), had launched grants to support food waste prevention actions, as part of the Single Market Programme:
 - invitation-based grants for Member States to support food waste measurement and implementation and evaluation of national food waste prevention programmes, with a total budget of €2 million and a deadline to apply by 30 October 2024;
 - a grant for the European Food Banks Federation of €200k to support their operations and development of digital solutions to quantify food donations and waste;
 - [grants to support actions to reduce consumer food waste](#), with a total budget of €4 million, which target both single stakeholders and multi-stakeholder collaborations or partnerships across the food supply chain. Projects should address consumer food waste both in- and out-of-home and would start in 2025. The deadline to apply is 25 September.
- The Joint Research Centre will soon publish the report “Building evidence on food waste prevention interventions”, with useful information on how to design, implement, and evaluate successful actions.
- The Commission is preparing a social media campaign to mark the International Day of Awareness on Food Losses and Food Waste on 29 September, which involves collaboration with chefs to create a zero-waste recipe book. This year, the International Day will be observed on Friday, 27 September 2024 (as 29 September is a Sunday).

2. EU food waste reduction targets: state of play by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission

The Belgian Presidency presented ([PDF](#)) the work of the Council on the Commission's legislative proposal for amending the Waste Framework Directive in relation to food waste and the main elements of the Presidency's compromise text.

The Commission outlined ([PDF](#)) the next steps in the legislative process. Following the adoption of their respective positions, informal negotiations will start between the Parliament and the Council, led by the Hungarian Presidency, with the potential for a political agreement by the end of 2024. A representative from **Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture** announced that the Hungarian Presidency will organise a food waste prevention conference in cooperation with FAO in Budapest, on 1 October 2024.

A representative of the **Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food** suggested a revision of the definition of food waste to distinguish between edible and inedible fractions. **The Commission** noted that the Belgian Presidency's compromise text included an obligation for the Commission to examine the possibility for introducing such a distinction and work will be carried out in this regard.

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

A representative of the **Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia** presented ([PDF](#)) their strategic reform on food investment and donation, funded by the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility with a €1.2 million budget. The reform includes, among others, infrastructural improvements, enhanced food donation systems, educational campaigns and integration of the topic into educational programmes.

A representative from **FAO** questioned whether 76% of the total food waste in Croatia can actually be attributed to consumers, given that this includes both edible and inedible waste, and the latter cannot be reduced by consumers. The representative of the **Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia** confirmed that the 76% figure includes both edible and inedible parts, noting that the focus of food waste prevention actions is to increase food donation. She noted that in Croatia, food donations by consumers are rare, with expectations to reduce food waste leaning towards the food business sector. **The Chair** acknowledged the long-standing challenge in distinguishing edible from inedible food waste, explaining that – as mentioned already earlier – work will be carried out to examine whether it is feasible to refine the EU food waste measurement methodology in this regard.

A representative of the **Danish Veterinary and Food Administration** introduced ([PDF](#)) their comprehensive food waste prevention strategy, which is set to run from 2024 to 2027 and includes 15 initiatives under 4 action tracks. Additionally, she explained the role of the think tank ONE\THIRD, the working group on regulatory barriers, ongoing research, the Danish voluntary agreement and consumer level actions.

A representative of **Slow Food** asked about the findings of the Danish research which indicate that date marking icons do not significantly contribute to consumer understanding of date marking. The organisation also inquired about the availability of reports on regulatory barriers and whether these are focused on Denmark or the EU more widely. The representative from the **Danish Veterinary and Food Administration** confirmed that insights on date marking were drawn mainly from domestic experiences and observations and [a study](#) was available for further information. The analysis of regulatory barriers was still in progress, with no finalised report to date.

A representative of the **Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania** highlighted ([PDF](#)) its approach to tackling food waste, which began with the Government's mandate to the Ministry of the Environment to set up a special group of experts in 2015, which spurred further research and influenced policy and legislative developments. The Ministry of Agriculture has developed a National Waste Prevention and Management Plan and an amendment to the Law on Waste Management, with legislative measures set to enter into force as of 1 November 2024. These measures require major retailers to have food waste prevention plans and specifying the amount of food waste to be reduced per year, with priority given to measures to change consumer behaviour, information campaigns to raise awareness of food waste prevention. Additional initiatives include tax incentives for food donation to charities and allowing retailers to sell and donate products past their 'Best before' dates, if safe for human consumption.

A representative of **COPA** inquired whether the government or specific organisations are responsible for purchasing agricultural surplus produce annually that are then destined for food donation. The representative of the **Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania** responded that surplus management is supported by a financial scheme from the Ministry of Agriculture, with funds directed to charity organisations.

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

A representative of the **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia** outlined ([PDF](#)) its efforts to reduce food waste, reporting 72 kg of food waste per capita in 2022, with 40% being edible. Slovenia adopted in 2021 an action plan focusing on households, catering services, and food redistribution. The action plan includes 57 measures, featuring the EcoSchool programme that engaged over 24000 children, and initiatives like "Cooking with Kids."

5. Food waste prevention in the EU – a mapping by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. Presentation by the European Environment Agency

A representative of the **European Environment Agency (EEA)** informed ([PDF](#)) that the EEA reviews Member States' national food waste prevention programmes and publishes progress reports every two years. The upcoming report to be published in December 2024, will contain a mapping by the European Topic Centre on current food waste prevention actions and policy measures in the Member States. The report categorises the actions according to the food use hierarchy. The preliminary findings show that 92% of Member States' initiatives prioritise actions at the highest levels of the food use hierarchy, mostly through soft policies. The representative of the EEA recommended developing guidance for integrating evaluation and monitoring into waste prevention programmes. Additionally, she discussed the potential for linking food waste prevention with biodiversity and climate policies, noting that only one country has integrated these practices into their biodiversity strategy, while eight have incorporated them into their climate strategies.

A representative of **FEFAC** inquired about the emphasis on feed in national food waste strategies. The representative of **EEA** responded by highlighting the importance of respecting the food use hierarchy, which places uses for animal feed among the higher food waste prevention actions. She suggested that enhanced information and knowledge about optimal pathways for food use are necessary.

A representative of the **International Food Waste Coalition** inquired about the way in which the EU Platform helps integrating food waste prevention into other policies (e.g. biodiversity and climate). The representative of **EEA** stated that countries are developing strategies for sustainable food systems, where biodiversity is often included. **The Commission** noted the Platform's role in monitoring and discussing broader policies linked to food waste prevention (e.g. such as climate and

food systems). For example, the Action & Implementation sub-group held a meeting on 4 October 2022 to discuss the link between food loss and waste and climate change. The Commission is exploring how food waste can be incorporated into climate initiatives with DG CLIMA and noted the importance of exploring the link between food waste strategies and other areas such as biodiversity.

A representative of **Harokopio University** raised concerns about the different interpretation of the food use hierarchy among Member States. They called for clear definitions from the Commission. The **Commission** informed that the Joint Research Centre would shortly release an assessment of the effectiveness of food waste prevention initiatives, which will provide further clarification on the different levels of the food use hierarchy.

A representative of **WRAP** inquired about the trends in circular economy. The representative of **EEA** outlined several trends and emphasised Member States' efforts to minimise the overall use of resources and their measures to reduce demand.

6. Platform sub-groups: Update by co-chairs and the Commission and discussion with members

The Commission announced that a meeting of the sub-group on Food loss and waste monitoring would take place on 11 July.

A representative of **Wageningen University & Research** presented ([PDF](#)) the findings from a mapping on voluntary agreements and other forms of collaborations across Europe. The [report](#) is a deliverable of the Platform, and was initiated by the Action & Implementation sub-group. The report emphasises the role of voluntary agreements in driving action against food waste across Europe. It covers 15 countries and an international coalition, demonstrates the widespread reach of these initiatives and presents some key learnings.

The Commission presented ([PDF](#)) a [toolkit](#) to reduce consumer food waste, which provides essential resources and practical tools for stakeholders committed to combatting food waste both in- and out-of-home. It includes a summary video and three tutorials available in multiple languages on identifying target audience, measuring food waste, and evaluating impacts. A highlighted feature is the [Food Waste Action Planner](#), a decision-making guide that categorises actions by type, target audience and scale, which aims to inspire further actions. Additionally, the toolkit features the [Food Waste Prevention Calculator](#), a digital tool developed by the Commission's Joint Research Centre, which assesses the nutritional, economic, and environmental impacts of food waste prevention actions. The toolkit also offers concrete recommendations for [policymakers](#), [food businesses and organisations](#), and [schools](#).

7. Closing remarks

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking members for their active participation and encouraged them to make use of the newly published toolkit and disseminate it to their networks, and to apply for the EU grants. The Chair underlined the importance of sharing information about ongoing projects, ideas, and experiences through the [EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#) to facilitate continuous collaboration and knowledge exchange among stakeholders. Finally, the Chair announced that the next plenary meeting of the Platform would take place in November 2024 (date TBC).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Annex

International conference ‘Towards halving food waste in Europe’

On 18 and 19 June 2024, Food Waste Free United organised the international conference “Towards Halving Food Waste in Europe” at ‘Cultuurhaven Veghel’ (Noord-Brabant), the Netherlands. The event brought together 370+ representatives from business, academia, government, and civil society, all committed to halving food waste by 2030.

During the first day of the conference, several new coalitions were announced. These coalitions bring together companies and organisations joining forces to make a big impact on reducing food waste. The new coalitions that were announced are: Date Labelling Coalition, Smart Food Technologies Coalition, Upcycled4Food coalition by Foodvalley.

On the second day, field trips were organised, with separate visits for Platform members to Duynie Ingredients which prevents food waste through using surpluses into other food products, or valorising food no longer intended for human consumption into feed ingredients, and to the Jumbo Training Academy which uses surplus food from their retail shops and transforms it into new food products.

Other participants visited the Fruit & Veggie Brigade, demonstrating rescue efforts for non-standard produce for food banks; Het Smaakcentrum, which educates children on healthy food choices; and Jumbo Supermarkten, showcasing their supply chain efforts to minimise food waste with practical demonstrations. Additional visits to Genson Group and Van Zutven highlighted their strategies in sustainable fruit cultivation and feed processing optimisation.