

Meeting Platform on food losses and food waste

June 15th

Italy: implementation of EU Platform key recommendations for action; management of surpluses in fruit and vegetables' producer organisations.

Thank you Chair,

Good Morning to everybody and thank you for this meeting after the release of Farm to Fork Strategy.

My speech concerns the Recommendations and some Italian actions to tackle food waste managing surplus. But before to start I wish to share some considerations.

1. The crisis of Covid 19 has reminded us that food production and the food supply chain are the basis of every economic system.
2. They must be protected.
3. Access to food must always be guaranteed to ALL EU citizens, even during crisis.
4. The pandemic has produced surpluses but also an increase of people in economic difficulties.
5. This crisis underlines that the continuity of food production by the supply chain, but also the recovery of surplus food, are fundamental.
6. In this situation, Italy has activated a national "food emergency fund" to feed the poor and to use surplus food.
7. Covid-19 teach us that the generation of surplus food and the recovery of surplus food are closely linked and that a correct management of surplus food is fundamental to tackle food waste.
8. For the future, it is necessary to strengthen community tools for the management of food emergencies and for the recovery of surplus food.

9. From the European Commission right now, we have three documents that concern these topics (*surpluses and access to food for most deprived*).
10. The "**Recommendations of actions for the prevention of food waste**" written by the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and released on 12 December 2019. It is a very interesting document that proposes many actions for the prevention and use of surplus food and to tackle food waste in the different sectors of the agri-food value chain. This document involved many and different stakeholders: the whole agri-food chain, charitable organizations such as the Food Banks, and public institutions.

11. The "**Farm to Fork**" **Strategy** also considers the circular economy and the fight against food waste. I believe that the Strategy invite us to consider charitable organizations recovering and redistributing surplus food for social purpose as an integral part of the agri-food chain and not merely as an option. This is an important step of a true circular economy.
12. The **next CAP** also has social purposes and must decline the principles of Farm to Fork Strategy.
13. I believe that the Recommendations can be useful to also decline some of the objectives expressed by the Farm to Fork Strategy.
14. Italy have already implemented some actions of the Recommendations: Law No 166/2016, the so-called Gadda Law, encourages the recovery of surplus food for social purpose, establishing a Table to tackle food waste and foster food aid with all the supply chain, the national fund for the most deprived, the national fund against food waste, the Observatory to monitor the use of surplus food.
15. We believe that these 5 actions are the necessary pillars to build concrete actions at national level.
16. The **Table** is a very important framework, because the actions that must be implemented must be studied, analysed and decided together.
17. Our Table is made of public Institutions, the entire agri-food chain and charitable organizations.
18. It is a Table founded on discussion and dialogues and it meets several times a year. The Table participates in the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste of the European Commission.
19. The national **fund for the most deprived** has a social purpose. It is used when there are food emergencies and the generation of surplus food along the food supply chain.
20. The **fund for the fight against food waste**, aims to develop actions against food waste and the recovery of surplus food.
21. The **Observatory** aims to study the causes of surplus food and their most preferred use along the whole food chain, from primary production to consumers. In the first year of activity, the Observatory collected the data provided by the members of the Table with the scope of creation of benchmark for monitoring changes and evaluate actions. At these initial stages, data from charitable organizations were also fundamental because of their fullness and their ability in providing historical information across the years. Sharing the data at all stages by all actors is a cornerstone of the success of the Observatory and in general of any monitoring action.
22. In 2020, the Observatory worked specifically on the primary sector studying the management of surplus with a focus on fruit producers' organizations. The results of this study underlined that a high level of Producers' Organizations (POs), meaning professional and well-structured Producers' Organizations, guarantee an appropriate and efficient management. The quota of residual products not distributed or not used for human feed is less than one third. The study also shows that in these organized systems most of the surplus is due to market crises and climatic accidents or

phytopathological causes. We are fully available to share this study in the next meeting of the Platform, if considered appropriate.

23. As part the data, I would just anticipate some general considerations related to this study: We notice that in this agricultural sector there are four elements that are fundamental to manage surplus food to avoid food waste:

- **if there is a Producer Organization, it is easier to manage surplus food** because they have different use options that reflect the pyramid of food uses: donations to charities; use for processed products (new life for surplus), use for biomass. These organizations have an adequate internal organization and sufficient quantities of product for the different destinations and contacts with charitable organizations or with the industry to be able to allocate excess products.
- a Producer Organization by itself is not sufficient, **it is necessary to have a framework that encourages the recovery of surpluses and allows to link offer to demand** (in this case CAP). CAP funds are an incentive to manage surplus food and still use it for human food consumption. Without incentives, uses such as sending food to the industry for processing or losing the food may be preferred. Perhaps this aspect should be further investigated;
- the **relationships between farmers and charitable organizations** and **the presence of organized charities on the territory** help the possibility of using this CAP tool;
- the dissemination to farmers of the **knowledge of these tools within the CAP** for the management of surplus food is extremely important to foster its use.

24. Perhaps we will have to ask ourselves whether the next CAP should not develop strategies like this to address the issue of food waste and losses in an integrated and overall manner.

25. Production systems based on the **short chain** in which the producer interfaces directly with the consumer could be an alternative to the organized systems such as Producer Organizations. The two models can coexist according to the territories and products. The short chain has a different approach linked directly to the consumer and linked to its territory. The short chain has not been already studied by the Observatory.

26. Going towards an even more general reasoning we could summarize these 4 points as follows: to manage surpluses in a systematic way you need 1) a systemic approach (a framework), 2) a form of financing (which could be a fund or even tax incentives, for example), 3) territorial (or national or European) coordination, 4) the dissemination of the project.

27. I believe that the Recommendations of the Platform have this systematic approach.

28. For this reason, our Table intends to study the Recommendations and try to develop some of the actions that are proposed. Indeed -as I said before- we believe that some of the actions provided by

the Platform can be useful for declining and implementing into practice the principles of the Farm to Fork Strategy.

29. Thank you very much for your attention.