



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Food sustainability, international relations
Farm to fork strategy

SUMMARY REPORT

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES & FOOD WASTE (FLW) SUB-GROUP ON ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY (SANTE)

6th meeting via WebEx Events

25 February 2021 – From 14:00 to 18:00

Chair: DG SANTE

Commission: DG SANTE ; JRC

Member States represented (8):

DE, ES, HR, HU, IE, NL, PT, SE.

Private sector organisations (12):

BOROUME – "We Can"; COPA COGECA - European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives; EUROCOMMERCE - the retail, wholesale and international trade representation to the EU; FEBA - European Food Banks Federation; FOODDRINKEUROPE - European Food and Drink Industry Association; FoodWIN - Food Waste Innovation Network; HOTREC - Hospitality Europe; OSTFOLD RESEARCH, Nofima and Matvett Consortium; STOP WASTING FOOD movement; WAGENINGEN University & Research; WRAP - Waste and Resource Action Programme; ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND.

Public entities (2):

CoR – European Committee of the Regions; FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

A meeting of the [Action and implementation sub-group](#), established under the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste \(FLW\)](#), took place virtually via WebEx Events on **25 February 2021** from **14:00** to **18:00** CET. The meeting provided the opportunity to discuss with the members of the sub-group the re-establishment of the EU Platform on FLW and the process of assessing the progress made in implementing the [Platform's key recommendations for action](#), published in December 2019. The Commission also provided an update on the EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub website, to be launched in 2021. Platform members took the floor to share the latest developments concerning work carried out by their Member State/Organisation.

The speakers' presentations are published on the [European Commission's Food waste website](#).

1. Scaling up action and mobilizing key players across the EU: introductory remarks by the Commission [[ppt](#)]

In her opening remarks, the Chair highlighted the importance of the Platform's recommendations for action in food waste prevention, adopted in 2019. The Commission encourages Platform members to promote their uptake by all actors in the food supply chain in order to **mobilise key players** across the EU to scale up action against food waste, as called for by the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#).

The Chair also provided an overview of on-going and future Commission initiatives, such as the future establishment of a *European Consumer Food Waste Forum* (a European Parliament pilot project) and providing support to actors in taking action to fight food waste through EU research and innovation ([Horizon Europe](#)) and funding opportunities for food waste prevention, such as through the future [Single Market Programme](#).

The Chair also brought to members' attention the launch of the [EIT Food annual call for applications to its flagship Entrepreneurship programmes](#). Through these business creation programmes, EIT Food supports agri-food entrepreneurs across Europe (including start-ups) to bring forward new business models and innovative solutions, and scale-up initiatives, in order to accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system.

2. Re-establishment of the EU Platform on FLW and assessment of progress made in implementing the Platform key recommendations for action, presentation by the Commission [[ppt](#)]

In order to take stock of the Platform's achievements and inform its re-establishment, the Commission will seek members' views on the **role, operations and deliverables of the current Platform**. To this end, the Commission will launch an **online survey**, created with the Commission's official online survey management tool ([EU Survey](#)), through which Platform members will have the opportunity to provide their feedback, which will feed into the Platform's future work programme.

The Commission will also use the survey to **follow-up on the recommendations for action**, one of the most important deliverables of the Platform. The [assessment of progress made in implementing the 2016 Council conclusions on food losses and waste](#), carried out in 2020 under the German Presidency, provides valuable information on food waste prevention undertaken in Member States. However, it does not specifically address how the Platform's recommendations for action have influenced this work nor how they may have been utilised by public and private organisations, as this was not part of the exercise as such. The Commission will therefore utilize the survey to consult Platform members as to the recommendations they have implemented, the results achieved, lessons learned, as well as to outline any critical gaps in these recommendations.

Based on the survey findings, **an activity report** will be produced, summarising the main achievements of the expert group in its 6 years of mandate and highlighting the recommendations for action that have achieved results on the ground.

In the context of this meeting, the Commission consulted members of the Action and implementation sub-group on the structure and content of the online survey, as well as on the best approach to follow-up on the Platform's recommendations for action.

The members of the sub-group welcomed the Commission's initiatives and agreed with the overall structure of the survey. As **initial feedback**, members suggested to provide more guidance to open

questions, in order to facilitate members' responses as well as their analysis. A number of participants also suggested that input on results achieved be sought for at least 3 recommendations that have been implemented, instead of only 1 as initially proposed by the Commission. Last but not least, members agreed on requesting quick feedback on the status of implementation (on-going, finalized, not implemented) for all the recommendations. The Chair invited members to provide further comments on the structure and content of the survey by 4 March 2021.

FEBA took the floor to share the results of a survey circulated to its members, aiming to **assess the level of implementation of the Platform's recommendations**, and more specifically those actions concerning **food donation**. Key findings indicate that most food banks are not aware of the recommendations, with few indicating to have implemented any related actions at national level. FEBA stated that it will pursue promoting the uptake of the Platform's key recommendations for action within its membership.

The rapporteurs (Copa Cogeca, FoodDrinkEurope, EuroCommerce, HOTREC, FEBA and Zero Waste Scotland) who led the development of the recommendations pointed out that it would be challenging to provide feedback on progress made in implementing the recommendations through the online survey by 2 April 2021, as suggested by the Commission. It was therefore agreed to allow a longer timeframe to reply to the second part of the survey referring to the recommendations for action. Members will be requested to send their answers by 15 April 2021 for the second part of the survey, while for the first part, regarding the role and operations of the Platform, the deadline will be set for 2 April 2021. The Commission will organise a dedicated meeting with rapporteurs to discuss the best approach to follow-up on the recommendations, ahead of the plenary meeting of the Platform on 18 March 2021.

Finally, the Commission presented an **indicative timeline** for the Platform's re-establishment and for the publication of its activity report.

3. EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub website: Member States pages, presentation by the Commission [[ppt](#)]

The Commission is currently developing the **EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub**, a website that will offer stakeholders active in food loss and waste prevention the opportunity to share best practices, find relevant information and policies and stay up-to-date with the latest developments in the field. The website will also encourage cooperation and communication among stakeholders and aspires to be a 'one stop shop' for actors across the food supply chain engaging in activities fighting food loss and waste.

The main functionalities of the Hub will be a **Resources database**, which builds on the [Community of Experts website](#), created under the [EU-funded REFRESH project](#) as a database of food waste prevention initiatives; a **News section**, which will also integrate an **Events calendar**; a **Newsletter**; as well as **EU Member States pages** (27 in total) with information on legislation, policies and initiatives related to food loss and waste prevention and reduction. The Commission envisages to launch the website on the occasion of the [International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste](#) on 29 September 2021.

The Commission presented the **Member States pages**, highlighting that this is still work in progress. The structure of these pages will follow the [Champions 12.3 Target-Measure-Act](#) approach. The Commission proposed to provide a first draft of the content of these pages, based on Member States'

contributions to the Council's assessment of progress in implementing its 2016 conclusions on food losses and waste. The draft pages would be reviewed by appointed Member States representatives before publication, while the goal is to regularly update the content, in order to incorporate the latest developments in the field at national level.

The Commission sought members' input on the structure and content of the Member States pages and encouraged them to submit their comments via email. As initial feedback, the members of the Action and implementation sub-group welcomed the initiative and provided positive feedback on the prominence given to the Target-Measure-Act approach. FoodWIN inquired whether there will be a link between the newsletter disseminated through the Hub and the [Platform's monthly newsletter](#), as well as whether private sector members of the Platform would be able to publish content on the Member States pages. The Commission explained that the goal is to streamline the information disseminated through the newsletters and there are discussions underway to identify the best technically feasible solution to achieve this. In addition, the Commission encouraged private sector organisations to liaise with national authorities in order to feed the Member States pages with information about their food loss and waste prevention initiatives, when appropriate, while reiterating that the website will be open to any stakeholder wishing to submit a resource or a news item. Stop Wasting Food movement proposed to integrate 'social sharing buttons' on the Hub, so that resources can be easily shared via social media networks.

4. Information sharing by Platform members

Stop Wasting Food movement [[ppt](#)] took the floor to share thoughts on how to continue to raise awareness about food waste, even under the complex context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The speaker suggested to focus on positive messages and put forward the benefits of saving financial and time resources, when encouraging people to reduce the amount of food wasted. Platform members concurred with the suggestion. While recognizing the importance of positive communications, WRAP believes that there is a unique opportunity to link food waste to climate change and to try to influence social norms.

Sweden [[ppt](#)] presented the [handbook](#) to reduce food waste in the public catering sector (preschools, schools, elderly care and hospitals), launched by the [Swedish Food Agency](#) in 2020. The handbook is based on the [Gothenburg model](#) and contains information about the [national food waste measurement method](#), proposes measures to reduce food waste, and includes action lists. Sweden also talked about the [date marking Christmas 2020 awareness campaign](#), communicated mainly on social media, aiming to increase consumer understanding on date marking and debunk common myths on this issue. Sweden will share with the Platform the results of a recent survey, which illustrates the latest consumer trends in food waste, expected to be published in mid-March 2021.

In addition, Sweden referred to the food waste mapping that was conducted in 2019 in municipal pre-schools, schools and elderly homes. FoodWIN was interested to know more about the process of collecting data, put in place by the Swedish authorities, and the response rate of the participants. Sweden stated that the collection of data was organized at municipal level and that the response rate was 73% (211 municipalities out of 290). Sweden will soon run again the same survey, for which a higher response rate is expected, and encouraged participants to refer to a more detailed [presentation of the mapping exercise](#), given at the [first food waste measurement webinar for Member States](#), held on 26 June 2020. Based on the mapping carried out in 2019, the highest levels of food waste recorded were during food service. In contrast, Zero Waste Scotland indicated that, according to a similar survey carried out among Scottish schools, plate waste was found to be the biggest. Zero Waste Scotland, as

well as WRAP and Ireland, will share the key findings of similar surveys they conducted, to offer the possibility for information exchange and benchmarking. Finally, Matvett invited members to learn more about the 'CutFoodWaste2020' project in the hospitality industry in Norway, in the [final report](#) published in 2020.

The founder of the Portuguese food donation charity '[Re-food 4 Good](#)', invited to the meeting as speaker, was interested to know whether food waste occurring in the public catering sector can be recovered by relevant charities. Sweden replied that unfortunately, this is not the case, as there are still obstacles related to the recovery and redistribution of surplus food from catering services, while ensuring food safety aspects. The Chair reminded that, whilst redistribution of food from the hospitality and catering sectors is more limited for food hygiene reasons, it is possible for food business operators to identify possible opportunities on a case-by-case basis. This issue is addressed in the [EU guidelines on food donation](#) and work is carried out in some Member States to provide more practical guidance regarding food donation from this sector of the food supply chain.

The Netherlands [[ppt](#)] informed participants about the national initiative that aims to clarify the meaning of 'use by' and 'best before' dates on food packaging by using visual cues (pictures, short texts or a combination of both). This is part of the [date marking campaign](#) launched in 2019 in the Netherlands, whose goal is to increase consumer understanding of date marking and which was presented at the [plenary Platform meeting of 15 June 2020](#). The expert from the Netherlands mentioned that [Wageningen University & Research](#) is carrying out research to determine the impact of different visual cues to improve consumer understanding and use of date marking, in order to prevent food waste. If results are promising, pilots are planned to be launched in autumn 2021. The Chair outlined that such interventions can help inform the Commission's work on the [revision of EU date marking rules](#); work in which the Platform will be closely associated.

The Netherlands also referred to work underway concerning the development of a national database with sustainable food interventions, including food waste prevention actions. The Chair asked whether the criteria for selecting relevant interventions would cover the 3 dimensions of sustainability (environmental-social-economic) and the expert from the Netherlands explained that the inclusion criteria have not yet been finalised. WRAP identified opportunities for collaboration and invited the Netherlands to exchange knowledge and information as regards the identification of criteria that could be utilised to assess the effectiveness of consumer-targeted interventions. WRAP has been working on developing a household simulation model, which tries to make predictions as to the impact that interventions might have on consumers' behavior at home (e.g. storage behavior, freezing habits, understanding and use of date marking etc.). The ultimate goal is to be able to link such consumer interventions to sustainability factors, based on how successful an intervention was in positively influencing, and possibly even changing, discarding behaviours at home. WRAP also encouraged members to explore the suite of resources developed under the '[Guardians of Grub](#)' initiative, which is focused on the hospitality sector.

The **Portuguese food donation charity**, the '[Re-food 4 Good](#)' organisation, took the floor [[ppt](#)] to present its work on recovering and redistributing safe surplus food in Portugal. The founder of the organisation emphasized the positive impact of their activities (environmental, financial and social), underscoring the importance of social inclusion, contribution of volunteers and the involvement of local communities. The Chair stressed the value of measuring and monitoring such activities, as well as of identifying scaling-up and replication opportunities.

The intervention from **HOTREC** [ppt] focused on analysing initial feedback received from its membership on the implementation of the Platform's key recommendations for the hospitality and food services sectors, while highlighting that its members have been predominantly dedicating their efforts in mitigating the negative impacts of Covid-19. Although the majority of the hospitality and food services businesses are aware of the need and benefits of taking action against food waste, they pinpointed certain challenges, such as the diversity of the sector, which hinders the identification of uniform solutions, or the difficult task of influencing consumer behaviour and expectations. Regarding the latter, the Chair recalled consumer interventions which have followed integrated approaches in order to address such challenges (e.g. offer consumer education, recommendations on maximum food quantities to consume, guidelines on healthy diets, etc). WRAP informed participants about the findings of a survey showcasing that consumers are open to the introduction of different portion sizes as a means of preventing food waste.

WRAP [ppt] presented its work on influencing consumer behaviour and setting new social norms around food waste at household level, pointing to research related to food waste behaviour in the context of the pandemic (a series of UK-wide surveys conducted in [April](#), [June](#), [September](#) 2020 and [February](#) 2021). Overall, key findings indicate that UK citizens' food habits, behaviors and attitudes have changed during 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic, and that food waste levels have dropped. WRAP highlighted the importance of their [Love Food Hate Waste](#) campaign in changing consumers' behaviors and highlighted the unique opportunity to accelerate efforts to influence consumers' lifestyles and discarding habits. In order to help UK citizens maintain their mindful food behaviors adopted during lockdown, WRAP launched the '[Keep Crushing It](#)' campaign in the summer of 2020. WRAP also took the opportunity to raise consumer awareness on the connection between food waste and climate change, through the '[Wasting Food: It's Out Of Date](#)' campaign launched in October 2020, as well as the first ever [Food Waste Action Week](#) (1-7 March 2021), organized in cooperation with a significant number of businesses across the food supply chain.

WRAP remarked that there is a generational division that exists in modern societies, whereby sustainable food management behaviors are not intuitive for younger generations. Ireland agreed with this observation and stated that, according to Ireland's [2020 national food waste attitudes survey](#) amongst younger age groups, 2 in 5 say they would like to reduce food waste but they don't know how. In this context, WRAP explained that they worked on developing tailored messages for younger generations. WRAP also emphasised that younger generations seem to acknowledge the link between food waste and climate change more easily than older generations. The Chair commented on the role that target segmentation can play in designing effective campaigns with well-targeted messages, and work carried out by Platform members in that regard.

FoodWIN took the floor to present the positive results from the first phase of a citizens' initiative addressing household food waste, carried out in the city of Bruges, which was inspired by the exchange of best practices facilitated through the Platform. A 65% reduction in food waste was reported after 50 ambassadors were trained to waste less food at home. FoodWIN is preparing for the next phases of the project, aiming to scale up the challenge to 500 citizens, and then to 5 000 citizens. FoodWIN will share with members a leaflet with more information about this initiative, available in English.

5. Conclusion and wrap up by Chair

The Chair thanked Platform members and speakers for their participation and for the various initiatives carried out to prevent and reduce food loss and waste across the food supply chain. The Chair also encouraged Platform members to engage in related discussions held in the run-up to the

[United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021](#). Finally, the Chair invited Platform members to pursue sharing information on food loss and waste prevention and reduction actions undertaken by their organisation/Member State through the [Platform's newsletter](#).