



EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Food and Business Practices – FoodDrinkEurope activities report (April 2022)

Executive summary

As one of Europe's largest manufacturing sectors and an integral link in the food chain, FoodDrinkEurope is committed to support the transition towards more sustainable food systems. We were therefore honoured to chair the EU Task Force to develop the "[EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Food and Business Practices](#)" and to work together with a wide range of food chain representatives, environmental and health NGOs, trade unions, consumer groups, the European Commission and global organisations such as FAO, OECD and WHO, during the first half of 2021.

Since the publication of the Code in July 2021, FoodDrinkEurope has established a dedicated workstream to support the implementation of the Code. Highlights of our activities include:

- Signatories to the Code: FoodDrinkEurope signed the Code on behalf of its entire membership, covering a network of 25 European sector associations, 26 national food and drink federations and 23 global food and drink companies, committed to help meet the Code's aspirations and objectives.
- Commitments to the Code: Beyond FoodDrinkEurope's commitment towards implementing the Code's aspirations and objectives, 11 member associations and 12 member companies have made concrete corporate and/or sector-specific commitments to the Code, with further commitments expected.
- Activities to support the Code: In order to implement the Code, FoodDrinkEurope launched its dedicated #FoodFuture project to engage with European stakeholders and develop an action plan towards more sustainable food systems. We also continue to promote the Code widely through our network and to advocate for its implementation.
- Chairmanship of the Signatories Group of the Code: FoodDrinkEurope continues its commitment following the launch of the Code to act as chairperson of the Signatories Group of the Code.

Please see below an overview of activities to support FoodDrinkEurope's signature of the Code.

1: How have you promoted and disseminated the Code?

FoodDrinkEurope has promoted the Code widely both to internal and external stakeholders.

Internal promotion:

- Convened more than a dozen internal meetings to engage and inform members at every level of the FoodDrinkEurope membership structure including at Board, Committee and Working Group level.
- Sent multiple emails to our network of 74 organisations detailing the Code's purpose and utility.
- Provided information and one-on-one support to help individual members make formal commitments to the Code.
- Promoted the Code in our internal Brussels Brief email to over 800 industry experts.
- Presented the Code to members of several National Federations and European Sector Associations.

External promotion:

- Translated the Code into 14 official languages (on top of 7 official languages provided by Copacogeca), which are published on the European Commission's [website](#).
- Co-organised with the European Commission an [affiliated session](#) of the pre-summit of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), 27 July 2021.
- Presented the Code of Conduct at several EU meetings, including:
 - o European Economic and Social Committee
 - o EU Platform on Food Loss and Food Waste
 - o EU Farm to Fork conference
 - o EU Industry Days
 - o EU Delegation to Ecuador
- Presented the Code at several stakeholder events, including:
 - o Forum for the Future of Agriculture
 - o EIT Food (event due on June 16)
 - o Presented the Code at several external meetings, including FoodDrinkIreland, FoodDrinkNorway, the Sectoral Social Dialogue, IBEC, the Alimentaria Hub conference in Barcelona and ICGA.
- Promoted the Code on social media, including:
 - o LinkedIn articles ([here](#), [here](#))
 - o Website ([here](#), [here](#), [here](#))
 - o Twitter ([here](#))
- Connecting meetings with national initiatives, such as [Origin Green](#) in Ireland
- Showcased the Code and example of commitments in our external #FoodFuture email to 8,000 Brussels stakeholders.
- Created a [dedicated section](#) on the FoodDrinkEurope website to showcase its members' sustainability initiatives in support of the Code.

2: How have you ensured members align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code?

In July 2021, FoodDrinkEurope signed the Code on behalf of all members – 26 national federations, 25 European sector associations and 23 companies. Members were also encouraged to further disseminate the Code to their members.

As noted above, FoodDrinkEurope presented and promoted the Code in multiple meetings, including at Board level, as well as individually to associations and their members and to multinational companies at European and global level.

Beyond the commitment of our 74 members towards implementing the Code's aspirations and objectives, we have also seen 11 member associations and 12 member companies make concrete commitments to the Code, with more commitments expected.

At FoodDrinkEurope, we launched our #FoodFuture project to develop an action plan to help the food and drink industry to implement the Code and deliver on sustainable food systems. More on this in section 3 below.

Several FoodDrinkEurope committees, for example FoodDrinkEurope's Environmental and Sustainability Committee, have also incorporated the Code into their work program.

3: Have you developed sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code?

In June 2021, FoodDrinkEurope launched its #FoodFuture project to help deliver on the Code's objectives and aspirations to achieve more sustainable food systems.

The project started with a comprehensive listening and engagement exercise across Europe to discuss all aspects of food sustainability and to understand how FoodDrinkEurope can work with members and partners to develop tools and resources to deliver better environmental and social outcomes.

The listening exercise included:

- Convening a series of 7 expert focus groups attended by 48 environmental experts, nutritionists, academics, farmers, young professionals, and start-ups.
- Convening a series of 5 consumer focus groups with Friends of Europe to acquire a snapshot of public opinion on food and food processing. There were 44 participants from 14 European countries.
- Co-hosting three UN Food Systems Summit Dialogues with partners including Thought For Food and the International Chamber of Commerce. We also hosted three panel discussions with Euractiv. The events focused on a wide range of topics such as innovation, climate action, SMEs, and more.
- Installing a food van in Brussels for two weeks where we convened #FoodFuture discussions with 50+ Brussels stakeholders and 50+ consumers.
- Inviting a range of stakeholders to contribute to our monthly #FoodFuture feature emails. These included contributions from four MEPs, six NGOs, the European Commission and FAO.

Overall, we have engaged with more than 2,000 stakeholders directly and reached more than one million users online. Using the outcomes from the listening exercise, the second part of the #FoodFuture project is to deliver an action plan with toolkits and guidance to help the food and drink industry speed the transition to more sustainable food systems.

Specific actions to date include:

- Sustainable Food Systems Partnership: FoodDrinkEurope has agreed to provide expertise as a partner on the [European Commission Sustainable Food System Partnership project](#) to collectively develop and implement an EU-wide research and innovation agenda to accelerate the transition

towards sustainable food systems. *When running (2024-2030) the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership should support all aspirational objectives of the Code, and in particular 5 and 6.*

- Support for the Food For Life R&I platform: FoodDrinkEurope has committed to continued support of the European Technology Platform (ETP) "[Food for Life](#)". In 2021 the platform updated its [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda and Implementation Action Plan](#) to address policy developments such as the Farm to Fork Strategy. *The R&I priorities and actions identified in the ETP "Food for Life" documents will help companies achieve all aspirational objectives of the Code.*
- Showcasing best practice: In 2021, FoodDrinkEurope launched [The Foodies Awards](#) to identify Europe's most sustainable food and drink SMEs and provide best practice examples for the rest of the industry to learn from. Alongside this, FoodDrinkEurope also launched [a new web page](#) to showcase more than 400 examples of how food and drink companies are contributing towards more sustainable food systems. *These case studies are relevant to all aspirational objectives of the Code.*
- Product environmental footprint (PEF) guide: FoodDrinkEurope is developing a guide on how to use PEF for food and drink companies. It will help food and drink manufacturers understand, measure and improve the environmental footprint of their products which will in turn help consumers to make more informed decisions on their food purchases. *This contributes to aspirational objective 1 for sustainable diets for all European consumers.*
- Decarbonisation roadmap: FoodDrinkEurope launched a [decarbonisation roadmap](#) in July 2021. The roadmap provides a general overview of the pathway to net-zero for the European food and drink manufacturing sector. Given the high degree of variability between sub-sectors and processes, some FoodDrinkEurope members have followed suit to develop their own specific decarbonisation roadmaps. *This contributes to aspirational objective 3 for a climate neutral food chain by 2050.*
- Framework conditions on packaging: FoodDrinkEurope [published a paper](#) on the framework conditions that are needed to support the transition to a true circular economy for food packaging. *This contributes to aspirational objective 4 for an optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain.*
- Pact for Skills partnership: FoodDrinkEurope partnered with Copa-Cogeca and a range of other stakeholders to develop a skills partnership for the agri-food industry. The aim of the 'Pact for Skills', which was launched on 18 February 2022, is to upskill and reskill the current workforce and making agri-food more attractive to young people, while providing a life-long learning perspective to both employers and employees. *This contributes to aspirational objective 5 for employment and decent work for all, including quality jobs, skilled workforce, and safe and inclusive workplaces for all.*
- Social dialogue partnership: FoodDrinkEurope partners with the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism (EFFAT) as part of the EU's social dialogue platform. A further project, FoodDrinksSD, was recently approved by the Commission to develop the working programme of the Social Dialogue, which in turn shall contribute to the Code. *This contributes to aspirational objective 5 for employment and decent work for all, including quality jobs, skilled workforce, and safe and inclusive workplaces for all.*

- Guidelines on allergens: In April 2022 FoodDrinkEurope updated its [guidance document](#) on food allergen management for food manufacturers. The aim of this document is to help ensure a consistent understanding of, and approach to, managing allergens and certain food causing intolerances to a high standard throughout the European food industry. *It contributes to the aspirational objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5.*

FoodDrinkEurope has a range of additional #FoodFuture activities that will be launched in the coming months as the industry continues to develop resources and partnerships to implement the Code.

4: Have you engaged with other food chain actors and EU and international policymakers to forge new relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered?

FoodDrinkEurope recognises that the transition to more sustainable food systems in line with the Code's objectives and aspirations will require collaboration with all stakeholders involved in the food system.

As part of its #FoodFuture project, FoodDrinkEurope therefore engaged directly with around 2,000 European stakeholders with an online reach of over 1 million.

The engagement was used to forge new relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges.

As noted above, highlights include:

- Convening a series of 7 expert focus groups attended by 48 environmental experts, nutritionists, academics, farmers, young professionals, and start-ups. Contributors came from private sector, civil society, academia and the policymaker community.
- Convening a series of 5 consumer focus groups with Friends of Europe to acquire a snapshot of public opinion on food and food processing. There were 44 participants from 14 European countries.
- Co-hosting three UN Food Systems Summit Dialogues with partners including Thought For Food and the International Chamber of Commerce. We also hosted three panel discussions with Euractiv. The events focused a wide range of topics such as innovation, climate action, SMEs, and more.
- Installing a food van in Brussels for two weeks where we convened #FoodFuture discussions with 50+ Brussels stakeholders and 50+ consumers.
- Inviting a range of stakeholders to contribute to our monthly #FoodFuture feature emails. These included contributions from four MEPs, six NGOs, the European Commission and FAO.

In addition, FoodDrinkEurope has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss sustainable food systems and further explore collaborations to deliver on the Code objectives and aspirations at a technical level.

Highlights include:

- Discussions around sustainable agriculture and food systems with CEJA young farmers, ELO landowners, Copa-Cogeca, FAO, SAI Platform and OP2B. We also engaged in dialogues with policymakers from the European Commission, European Parliament and Council on these topics.
- FoodDrinkEurope's Secretariat (representing the European Technology Platform "Food for Life") participates at several stages of the preparation of the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership

together with 17 partners, including research institutes, networks of national R&D funders, scientists, farmers, food industry and philanthropic associations among others.

- FoodDrinkEurope works alongside [23 partners](#) in the Coordination and Support Action [FoodSafety4EU](#), that supports the European Commission in shaping the food safety system of the future, by aligning research, policy and innovation with the societal needs and perspectives and improving food safety across Europe. A pool of 23 partners from 12 EU Member States and Associated countries (full list here) runs the FoodSafety4EU project.
- FoodDrinkEurope participates in FIELDS, a collaborative ERASMUS+ project run by a consortium of [31 partners](#). FIELDS aims to identify existing and emerging skills needs in bio-economy, sustainability and for the use of digital technology, to develop sectoral skills strategy and keep food systems competitive and sustainable in the long term.
- FoodDrinkEurope has established the [Pact for Skills partnership](#) which it leads alongside Copacogeca (farmers). There are a large number of additional partners including companies, food and drink national federations, universities, training provider associations, and policy makers (European Commission).
- FoodDrinkEurope has worked with the packaging value chain most importantly as part of the [Circular Plastics Alliance](#).

Finally, in its capacity as Chair of the Task Force and the Signatories Group of the Code of Conduct, FoodDrinkEurope has increased its engagement with food chain actors, international organisations and civil society groups to aid the transition towards more sustainable food systems.
