



24 February 2022

Mandate of the sub-group established under the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste to support EU activities in relation to ‘date marking and food waste prevention’

1. Background

As provided for in the Terms of Reference of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste (FLW)¹ and its Rules of Procedure, the Chair of the Platform may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by the Platform. At the first meeting of the EU Platform on FLW under its second mandate (2022-2026), it was agreed that a subgroup would be established in order to support work at EU level in relation to date marking and food waste prevention, as laid down in the Farm to Fork Strategy².

The Strategy foresees the revision of EU rules on date marking in order to prevent food waste linked to misunderstanding and/or misuse of these dates. The Commission is currently carrying out an impact assessment (with public and targeted consultations) to support its proposal, as well as consumer research to identify new ways of expressing date marking that meet consumers’ information needs whilst minimising food waste. In this context, a targeted consultation related to the revision of EU date marking rules and this consumer research took place with the Platform on 30 November 2021³.

As part of the 2015 Circular Economy Action Plan⁴, the Commission has sought to examine ways to improve the use of date marking by actors in the food chain and its understanding by consumers, with the support of the EU Platform on FLW and its sub-group on date marking. Date marking was a regular item on the agenda of the EU Platform on FLW in order to facilitate exchange of information on initiatives implemented in Member States. Feedback from members, collected at the end of the Platform’s first mandate⁵, confirmed the importance of maintaining the sub-group on date marking under the Platform’s new mandate (2022-2026).

¹<https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAdditionalInfo/41511/download>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0381>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/date-marking-and-food-waste_en

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52015DC0614>, point 5.2

⁵ Ahead of the re-establishment of the Platform for a new mandate, members were asked to reply to a survey on the role and the operations of the expert group (48 contributions received). When asked about the relevance of the Date marking and food waste prevention subgroup, despite its limited activity, most of the respondents considered it very important (64.58%) or important (22.92%).

A market study on date marking and food waste prevention was carried out by the Commission⁶ and scientific advice requested from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)⁷ in order to support food business operators in the application of relevant EU rules. While a task force (of the sub-group on date marking) was established in order to help develop guidance to support more consistent date marking practices, this initiative was deferred following announcement of the legislative initiative to revise EU date marking rules put forward in the Farm to Fork Strategy action plan.

2. Objectives

The sub-group on date marking and food waste prevention is established in order to:

- support the Commission in identifying and prioritising actions to be taken at EU level in order to prevent food waste linked to date marking;
- to assist the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives related to date marking and food loss and waste prevention as well as the implementation of relevant Union legislation, programmes and policies;
- support all actors in identifying and implementing appropriate actions to be taken at national, regional and local levels to promote more consistent use of date marking and facilitate consumer understanding;
- share experience and evidence-based best practice in relation to date marking and food waste prevention.

3. Principal tasks:

3.1. Contribute, as appropriate, to the Commission's legislative work related to date marking through sharing of relevant information and evidence from date marking initiatives undertaken in Member States.

3.2. Recommend actions required to promote more consistent use and understanding of date marking in order to prevent food waste.

3.3. Monitor implementation of the recommendations for action⁸ of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste as regards date marking.

3.4. Possible development of tools in relation to date marking and food waste prevention (e.g. coordination of consumer information campaigns in collaboration with the consumer food waste prevention sub-group; guidance to support more consistent date marking practices by food business operators).

3.5. Information sharing on date marking activities in Member States: provide information and input on national/sectorial practices, guidelines and rules, recent studies and reports on date marking activities, packaging solutions, dynamic shelf-life labelling and related technologies in view of their sharing with Platform members and publication on the [European Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#).

⁶<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e7be006f-0d55-11e8-966a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁷ [Guidance on date marking and related food information: part 1 \(date marking\)](#), [Guidance on date marking and related food information: part 2 \(food information\)](#)

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/food/system/files/2021-05/fs_eu-actions_action_platform_key-rcmnd_en.pdf

4. Participants:

Based on interest expressed by Platform members in their applications and via the survey, the Commission invites the following Platform members to participate in the work of the sub-group on date marking and food waste prevention:

Member States (14): Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden.

Private sector organisations (17): BEUC - The European Consumer Organization, COGECA - European Agri-cooperatives, COPA - European Farmers, DUH - Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V., ECSLA - European Cold Storage and Logistics Association, Euro Commerce, EDA - European Dairy Association, FOODCLOUD, FOODDRINKEUROPE, FruitVegetablesEUROPE (EUCOFEL), Independent Retail Europe, Les Restaurants Du Cœur, Matvett-Norsus-Nofima Consortium, Stop Wasting Food Movement DK, Too Good To Go, WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme, WUR - Wageningen University & Research.

Observer: Norway.

Taking into account the field of activity of this sub-group and its relevance for all members represented in the EU Platform, the participation might be extended on a case-by-case basis to other Platform members, as well as ad hoc experts⁹, if needed.

5. Co-chairs of meetings

In line with the Platform's Terms of Reference, '*sub-group meetings may be co-chaired by DG SANTE and Platform members, as appointed by DG SANTE based on their expertise and expressed interest to coordinate work related to their field of expertise.*' Co-chairs appointed from among the Platform membership may request to hold meetings of their respective sub-groups, propose agenda items and topics for discussion. Co-chairing will be done through rotation, for those members who have expressed an interest in acting as co-chair in their application form. Expressions of interest in co-chairing may be updated during the course of the Platform's mandate.

The Commission will update the **co-chairing calendar** based on the interest expressed by members.

Organisation	Year
Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)	2022
Netherlands	2023
Wageningen University & Research	2025

⁹ Terms of Reference EU Platform on FLW, <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/expertGroupAdditionalInfo/41511/download>

6. Overall timeline and working procedures:

The sub-group on date marking and food waste prevention will support the Platform's work in this area for the duration of its mandate (*ie* until end 2026).

The sub-group is expected to meet twice yearly (in addition to the Platform's plenary meetings) and will also provide comments and input on written documents related to the tasks outlined in section 3.

The working language for sub-group meetings will be English.