

FEBA calls on EU Member States to support the European Parliament's report on the EU Waste Framework Directive

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About FEBA

The European Federation of Food Banks (FEBA) is a European umbrella non-profit organization which brings together 326 food banks in 23 member countries in Europe. For more than 30 years, FEBA's mission has been to contribute to reducing hunger and malnutrition through the fight against food waste and the call for solidarity.

FEBA food banks are mainly operated by experienced volunteers, who recover edible surplus food at any stage of the food supply chain (agricultural cooperatives manufacturing plants, distribution platforms, supermarkets, caterers, etc.) and redistribute it to partner charitable organisations taking care of people in need. In addition, FEBA food banks also distribute food originating from the EU programs, Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and Fruits & Vegetables withdrawal, as well as from individual donations.

FEBA's recommendations on the EU Waste Policy review

FEBA welcomes the provisions on preventing food waste in the on-going EU Waste Policy review as part of the Circular Economy Package, in line with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its target of halving per capita food waste by 2030.

FEBA also welcomes the recently established EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste where FEBA cooperates with Member States and other stakeholders across the food supply chain to achieve the UN target on food waste.

However, FEBA believes that the **role of food donation should be enhanced further in the EU Waste Framework Directive** as it prevents food waste while simultaneously alleviating food poverty and social exclusion. FEBA estimates that currently food banks and organizations alike only recover a tiny percentage (less than 10%) out of the 23 million tons of edible food that is wasted every year in the European Union in the food chain segments of primary production, processing, wholesale/retail and food service (source: EU-FUSIONS, March 31, 2016).

In order to reduce the amount of edible food that goes to waste, FEBA recommends to the EU Member States currently reviewing the EU Waste Framework Directive, to include the following measures:

1. **Need for a specific focus on food waste.** Food Waste is different from waste of other origin, as from industry, construction, etc. Food waste needs a different and specific consideration as it relates to consumption by human beings and as all edible surplus food should contribute to alleviate hunger and malnutrition among vulnerable populations.

In this respect, **food donation** to charity organisations, such as food banks, **is a key lever to reduce food waste** and should be promoted to a large extent.

2. **Encourage the application of the food waste hierarchy.** EU Member States should encourage the application of the food waste hierarchy in the EU food waste policy as per the European Parliament's report, in the following order of priority:

- 1) Prevention of food waste
 - 2) Redistribution to people in need through the donation of edible surplus food, for instance to food banks and their partner charity organisations
 - 3) Re-use as animal feed
 - 4) Organic recycling (compost) & energy recovery
 - 5) Disposal
3. **Facilitate food donation through national food waste prevention measures and incentives.** EU Member States should adopt national food waste prevention frameworks that enable the food sector to further distribute and donate surplus food, as put forward by the European Parliament. EU Member States should provide fiscal or financial incentives to food business operators as well as **grants for capacity building of food banks and their partner charity organizations** for the recovery of unsold edible food products from the whole food supply chain for their redistribution to vulnerable population, without compromising food safety.
4. **Consider food donation when assessing the progress of national food waste prevention programmes.** According to the Proposal for an EU Waste Framework Directive, EU Member States would have to monitor the implementation of their food waste prevention measures by calculating the levels of food waste based on an EU common methodology, to be developed by the Commission by the end of 2017. In this context, EU Member States should also consider food donation when measuring the progress of their food waste prevention programmes, as put forward by the European Parliament. Food banks are prepared to share data regarding donations with Member States, so as to contribute to this monitoring process.
5. **Eliminate remaining national barriers to food donation.** As stipulated under EU legislation, EU Member States should allow the **donation of certain food products after the ‘best before’ date has expired**, provided that the required safety food storage and transport conditions are met. EU Member States should also **clarify the meaning of date marking on foodstuffs** for food business operators and consumers in national food labelling legislation. Currently, the “best before” and “use by” dates are often interpreted as “good-to-throw-away” date, leading to unnecessary waste of edible food.
6. **Consult stakeholders on the implementation of national food waste prevention measures.** EU Member States should consult stakeholders across the food supply chain when implementing national food waste prevention programmes, including FEBA, food banks and their partner network of charity organisations, to enhance the cooperation and reduce food waste through food donation.

FEBA contact info:

Patrick Alix - Secretary General
Email: palix.feba@eurofoodbank.org
Tel: + 33 6 11 78 88 48