Food banking and social cohesion

On September 20th, a FEBA representative travelled to Strasbourg to speak during the European Social Cohesion Platform at the Council of Europe. FEBA’s presentation was linked to one of the three priorities of the platform, namely the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

FEBA presented the many ways in which food banks foster social inclusion: 1) by creating a safe and inclusive space for vulnerable people to receive nutritious food 2) giving them a helping hand to reduce their food budget 3) creating a platform for volunteering and thus strengthening the cohesion in communities among diverse groups of people of different ages and educational backgrounds.

As an umbrella organization, FEBA was happy to be included as a stakeholder in the discussion on “poverty and social exclusion” at the Council of Europe.

FEBA presents at the 7th FEAD Network meeting

On September 21st, FEBA’s Secretary General attended the 7th meeting of the FEAD Network hosted by EU - DG Employment “Preventing food waste through FEAD actions” as a panellist during the opening session alongside the Spanish Red Cross. He acknowledged that being a Partner Organization of FEAD receiving predictable quantities of selected products provided the opportunity to develop the recovery of large food surplus for social purpose and credibility to partner with food corporations. He invited charities to partner with food banks to rescue foodstuffs from medium size stores. He also advocated that distributing organizations should receive funding to be able to recover more surplus food for the benefit of the most deprived people, underlining however that not all charitable organizations can sustainably and safely handle large quantities of food due to current regulations.

The FEAD Network is a productive platform to bring together public, private and non-profit stakeholders working in domains of food security, food surplus collection and social inclusion.

FEAD reduces poverty in Europe

In July the EU Commission published its summary report on the impact of the implementation of the national operational programmes co-funded by FEAD in 2015.
EUR 388 million was paid in 2015 with most payments going to food support operations (98%). 409 000 tonnes of food were distributed contributing to the provision of 47 million meals to over 14 million people in the EU through various types of food aid programmes. The most common accompanying measure to promote social inclusion of the most deprived people remains the provision of information and referral to competent social services.

The report recognizes that the definition of reported most deprived persons varies among Member States and lists a couple of challenges met by distributing organization.

It re-affirms in its conclusion the specific role of the program which is “Given the limited resources of the FEAD, [its specific role is] to alleviate poverty and promote social inclusion, including by creating links with other available services. In this way the fund may be the first step on a pathway away from poverty.” Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament

Food bank management training in Vilnius

On September 12th-15th The Lithuanian food bank, MaistoBankas, hosted the « Food Bank Management Training » for food bankers from Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Sweden, Macedonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in close collaboration with FEBA. The training covered a range of subjects relevant for all food banks, including: Governance, HR Management, Management of partner charities, Food sourcing, Logistics and Food Traceability, Communication and Fundraising, Annual in-store food drive, Risk Management, Financial Management and IT.

The training was started with a presentation of MaistoBankas, a fast growing national organisation who first launched in 2001, and which today redistributes food to more than 72,000 vulnerable people every month.

Each participating country held a short presentation of its key impact figures, successes and challenges related to the overall agenda. The group also had the chance to visit one of MaistoBankas partner charities, a day care center for children in Vilnius.

A good opportunity for new food bankers to learn, exchange and join our network of solidarity across Europe!
Barcelona peer visit

On September 13th-14th, three managers from the Caen food bank, visited the Barcelona food bank, Banc del Aliments (Catalan), in light of the FEBA peer visit program implemented with the support of the Kellogg company.

The visit started with a mutual presentation of the key characteristics and impact figures of the two food banks. During the visit several learning points stood out replicable best practices. Among them were:

- **Online donation of food products**: The website of Banc del Aliments has a specific page for donating food products. The products are listed and each have an icon and unit price. The donor can thus click and choose how many or which of each products he/she wishes to buy online for the food bank.
- **Pro bono collaboration with local media**: Local media regularly donate “unsold” add-, or article coverage space for the Banc del Aliments. This means that the food bank gets regular and widespread PR throughout the region, which is a huge bonus for recruiting volunteers and attracting corporate partners.
- **Webpage dedicated to annual in-store food drive**: Every year the food bank mobilizes 20,000 volunteers for the annual in-store food drive, and this is partly due to the separate website dedicated to inform and enable volunteers to join the food drive.
- **Transformation of fruits and vegetables**: The food bank works with two local transformation plants, for transforming surplus fruits and vegetables into juices.

Feedback from participants on both sides was very positive.

Visits to members

FEBA team members conducted four visits in September

The Czech Federation of Food Banks

The Federation brings together 14 food banks across the country and strong development is expected for the whole year with the start of the FEAD program distribution. Public funding has been obtained for three years for capacity building in each food bank. A new food waste law similar to the French one is due to come into force early 2018.

At date, the network food banks support 231 partner charities, who serve **24,000 beneficiaries** every month.
The Slovakian Food Bank

The Slovakian Food Bank consists of 15 distribution centres in three regions of the country, including one central food bank in Kosice. Strong growth is expected again this year with increased quantity of FEAD products and more surplus recovered. Today the Slovakian Food Bank provides food to 115 partner charities.

The third and last phase of the refurbishing of the central warehouse of Borcova made possible thanks to the Unilever donation is now finished and fully in operation. We look forward to following this Slovakian success story!

The Austrian association of Tafeln and the Wiener Tafel

The national organization comprises now 7 food banks / Tafel throughout the country learning to work together and build an inclusive network.

The Wiener Tafel opened a “Tafelhaus” in the Wien wholesale market during summer, a major step to increase the recovery of fresh products and their pick up by partner charities.

Food Bank Macedonia « Food for All ».

The finding of regular food suppliers is still an uphill battle, but the infrastructure for launching the food bank is coming into place, partly thanks to a FEBA/Unilever donation which funded the rent of a new warehouse in Skopje in 2017. The FEBA team also had a chance to meet the Macedonian prime minister, Zoran Zaev.

Soon a national federation in Norway

The Norwegian Federation of food banks is ready to be created in October with 5 food banks thanks to the relentless efforts of the team of Matsentralen, the Oslo food bank. Matsentralen, has recently received a generous donation from the Kavlifondet (a foundation of the Kavli Group, a multinational dairy products company) which enable the building of the federation and provide funding for the launch of 3 new food banks across Norway during the next 15 months.
Digital pen simplifies storage at Partage, the food bank in Geneva, Switzerland

9 tons of food is a lot to collect, store and redistribute to 51 charities every day. This is the amount received at Partage, the food bank in Geneva. Luckily, the food bank has recently developed an effective solution to simplifying the process of scanning and storing the products while updating the product database.

The “DIM.Pen” is a digital pen, equipped with a small camera which scans the bar code on the product, and automatically uploads the information into Partage’s database. The information is thus immediately available to all 51 charities, who can quickly reserve and plan their reception of the food.

The development of the “DIM.PEN” has already enabled the food bank to distribute goods one day earlier (on average), than before the arrival of the “DIM.PEN”. This optimisation of resources and digital tools is result of efficient ideas brought from the banking sector: “When I arrived, we did not have any online tools to manage our stocks” says deputy director, Hubert Pinier.

http://www.bilan.ch/plus-de-redaction/une-banque-alimentaire-a-lheure-40

Managing food waste – free online course for everyone

“Share food, cut waste” is the name of the free MOOC (Massive open online course) created by the Italian Federation of Food Banks in collaboration with Politecnico di Milano. The course is addressed to anyone interested in reducing food waste and enhancing food security for people in need. Producers, food transformers, distributors, HoReCa enterprises and non-profit organizations, as well as consumers and citizens, can gain new knowledge on issues such as the food waste hierarchy, food donation, healthy and responsible patterns of food consumption, food banking. The course also offers operational guidelines, best practices and conceptual models to managers, employees and volunteers who want to get proficient in surplus food re-use and re-distribution.

Meet Professors from Politecnico, Milan School of Design and Management, as well as professionals from the Italian Food Bank Federation.