



FEBA EU Working Group **2020 REPORT**



Contents

Introduction	1
<hr/>	
EU Policy Developments in 2020	4
<hr/>	
FEBA EU Working Group / Meeting Reports	14
<hr/>	
Aknowledgement	33

Introduction

2020 was a year that brought unexpected and dramatic changes and challenges for each and everyone of us in our daily lives, but also on a broader political and socio-economic level. The Coronavirus pandemic is not just a health crisis, it has thrown many people into insecurity overnight, especially those who were marginalised before, and it has also disrupted our food system.



Almost all FEBA members have been experiencing an increase of food demand ranging from 6% to even 90%, while at the same time facing a loss of volunteers, drops in financial resources, and the need to quickly reorganize their operations to everchanging circumstances.



In 2020 FEBA conducted 3 surveys and released 4 reports to have a better overview and also advocate at EU level on the basis of specific needs and challenges on the ground.

Present challenges and urgent need of European Food Banks / April 2020



European Food Banks in a post COVID-19 Europe / July 2020



European Food Banks today: commitment, creativity and openness to change / September 2020



European Food Banks: a wave of solidarity to face COVID-19 / December 2020



This health and socio-economic emergency call for **strong and united political responses at European level** in order to be able to recover and use this crisis as an opportunity to identify room for improvement and to build back better. The urgency of the situation and the light that the pandemic shed on longstanding political topics such as food insecurity, food losses and waste, as well as social issues lead to progress in many EU policies.

Food waste is one of the biggest and most profound challenges of our time. We firmly believe that today the Farm to Fork Strategy, part of the European Green Deal, is an opportunity to rethink the agri-food supply chain in the light of the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and move towards a more sustainable and resilient food system. By doing so, we can achieve the goal to prevent food waste while reducing emissions and environmental impact, creating business opportunities and alleviating food insecurity in Europe. In this context, **the access to food has proved to be a priority, underlining the**

importance of an easily accessible, affordable, healthy and balanced diet for all.

Despite the situation, the EU Working Group hasn't stopped its activity but continued – thanks to technology and online systems for conference calls – to advocate both at EU and national level. From the beginning of 2020 till the end, the objective of the EU Working Group was to convene in one single voice a common position towards the challenges Europe is facing and set a common workplan to advocate for the interests of the Food Banks in the upcoming months and year. Other than and organising **4 meetings** and facilitating regular exchanges via email, FEBA drafted **8 EU Monitoring Reports** covering the most important updates at EU level concerning Food Banks' interests and disseminated **briefings** on the main important topics (e.g. European Green Deal, REACT-EU). Moreover, FEBA and its EU Working Group drafted **1 position paper** and submitted a feedback to **5 open consultations** published by the European Commission on relevant topics and policies to play a key role and position Food Banks at the core of the decision-making process.



This report aims at giving an overview of developments in those EU policies that can affect the daily activities of FEBA members, with an introduction on the most important policy developments at EU level and an overview on the work carried out by the FEBA EU Working Group throughout this challenging year. Led by FEBA, the EU Working Group was established in 2018 and is made of 29 Food Bank representatives from 19 members (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain).



2020 FEBA EU Working Group Meetings



19-20 February (Brussels) /
Working together with the new
European institutions

12 
participants

9 June (Online) / New measures
and policies to face COVID-19 and
build a more resilient food system

32 
participants

22 July (Online) / The day after the
European Council: what's next for
European Food Banks?

18 
participants

**7 September (Internal EU Working
Group - Online) /** What's at stake
for the future of European Food
Banks?

38 
participants

2020 FEBA contributions to EU policy-making process



- ✓ “New Circular Economy Action Plan - FEBA Consultation on the Roadmap” / 20 January
- ✓ “From Farm to Fork Strategy for sustainable food - Consultation on the Roadmap” / 16 March
- ✓ Revision of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on food hygiene - Open Consultation (Brussels) / 6 August
- ✓ Consultation on the European Child Guarantee - Feedback from the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) / 7 October
- ✓ “European Food Banks: concrete answers for the new food system” / 15 October
- ✓ Have your say on reinforcing Social Europe - Contribution from the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) / 30 November

Read our
contributions on
FEBA website



EU Policy Developments in 2020

1. EU spearheads efforts for recovery in 2021-2027

After months of negotiations that almost failed due to a veto of Poland and Hungary that opposed the new rule of law mechanism, the new **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and the Coronavirus recovery package Next Generation EU (NGEU)** were adopted just in time in December 2020. The total amount of **€1.8 trillion**, with €1.074 trillion for the MFF 2021-2027 and an additional €750 billion for the temporary recovery fund NGEU aims at **building a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe**.

50% of the amount is dedicated to modernising the EU through policies such as **Horizon Europe** that aims at fostering research and innovation; the Just Transition Fund that ensures a fair green and digital transition, the Digital Europe programme as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility and rescEU that aims at protecting citizens from disasters and managing emerging risks. Cohesion policies and the Common Agricultural Policy continue to receive significant EU funding and will be modernised towards green and digital transitions. **30% of the MFF and NGEU are dedicated to fighting climate change.**

2020 was a challenging and extraordinary year. But also a year that brought us together and made us stronger. New policies, regulations and legislations were adopted, especially in the second half of the year, to reach strategic objectives.



The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) , which will have a total allocation of **€98.5 billion** (current prices) in comparison to €74 billion for the MFF 2014-2020, is especially important for FEBA members. The ESF+ integrates the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) as well as other funds (the former European Social Fund, the Youth Employment Initiative and the Employment and Social Innovation Programme). **Read more on the ongoing negotiations regarding the ESF+, as well as the adoption of the REACT-EU initiative further down in the report.**

The new long-term budget 2021-2027 also includes various new components, such as the EU4Health programme and **new own resources** that will help pay back the borrowing under NGEU and include a carbon border adjustment mechanism and a digital levy (proposal in June 2021 and introduction at the latest 2023), an emission trading system (proposal in June 2021) as well as other new own resources such as a financial transaction tax, financial contributions of the corporate sector or a new common corporate tax (proposals by June 2024). It also includes a new rule of law mechanism that protects the budget against breaches of the law, new integrated and interoperable information and monitoring systems, as well as increased flexibility mechanisms.

Financial allocation MFF 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU per policy area (in billion €)

Policy area	MFF	Next Generation EU	Total
Single Market, Innovation and Digital	132.8	10.6	143.4
Cohesion, Resilience and Values	377.8	721.9	1099.7
Natural Resources and Environment	356.4	17.5	373.9
Migration and Border Management	22.7		22.7
Security and Defence	13.2		13.2
Neighbourhood and the World	98.4		98.4
European Public Administration	73.1		73.1
Total	1074.3	750	1824.3

Read the full legislative document for the MFF 2021-2027 (Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093), available in all EU languages



Read the full legislative document for the Next Generation EU (Council Regulation (EU) 2020/2094), available in all EU languages



2. Food first: preventing food waste for human consumption

1. Farm to Fork Strategy: moving towards a sustainable and resilient food system in the EU

In May 2020, the European Commission presented the Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F) which is a central part of the European Green Deal and aims at making our food system resilient, fair, healthy and sustainable. In relation to food loss and waste, F2F sets the goal of halving food loss and waste at retail and consumer level by 2030, in line with the UN SDG Target 12.3.

The Commission also set up an **Expert Group's dedicated sub-group on a contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security** composed of Member States and relevant stakeholders (as observers) in order to share insights on problems they encountered as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak or other crises. **FEBA is part of that Expert Group** as an observer and gave input at the group's first meeting on 20 January 2021.

As part of the F2F Strategy, the European Commission will put forward a proposal, by the end of 2023, for **EU-level targets for food waste reduction** that will set legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU. The F2F Strategy also includes the **revision of date marking** on EU food ("use by" and "best before") by the end of 2022 in order to simplify food labelling and promote better knowledge about it. During its meeting



on 19-20 October 2020, the **Agriculture and Fisheries Council adopted Council conclusions on the F2F Strategy**, reaffirming its commitment to the strategy and recalling on the Commission's responsibility to put forward such legislation.

Food labelling, sustainable food systems and many more topics were also part of the "Farm to Fork 2020 Conference – Building sustainable food systems together" that took place online on 15-16 October 2020.

2. The work of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste continues

The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, that was established in 2016, brings together key players from the public and private sector, ranging from EU institutions, to experts from the EU countries, as well as relevant stakeholders. All of them have the goal to jointly deliver to SDG 12.3 (halving food loss and waste by 2030) through working together to better identify, measure, and understand, as well as finding solutions to deal with food waste. On 15 June 2020 the 8th plenary session of EU Platform on Food Losses and Waste took place virtually with a focus on the newly adopted F2F Strategy and the fact that a strategic part of this strategy is the reduction of food loss and waste.

As part of the F2F Strategy, the Commission proposes to:

1. establish, by 2023, binding EU-level targets for food waste reduction, based on the results of the first round of EU-wide monitoring using common methodology)
2. revise EU rules on date marking by 2022, to improve consumer understanding and their use by all players
3. further investigate food losses at the production stage
4. scale up action and mobilise key players across the EU.

Moreover, in order to take stock of the progress made so far and foster exchange between stakeholders, the 9th plenary session of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Waste took place virtually on 10 December 2020. The European Commission and the German Presidency gave their input on current and future strategies and legislation, which was followed by a series of best-practice inputs from stakeholders.



The European Food Banks Federation was invited as speaker to the meetings of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Waste in 2020.



- **15 June 2020** / FEBA and FoodCloud, Transforming surplus into opportunity – How COVID-19 shone a light on the role of Food Banks for food security
- **10 December 2020** / FEBA, Update on food waste prevention activities from the European Food Banks Federation

Moreover, each month FEBA contributed to the Platform's newsletter with updates from its network.

Access the presentations via the QR codes



3. Council conclusions on food loss and waste implementation assessment

In 2016, the Council of the EU adopted Council conclusions in which it called on Member States to adhere to their commitment to reduce food waste and losses and take respective actions. A second periodical assessment of the measures taken by Member States took place under the German presidency.

The assessment showed that there has been a lot of progress, most Member States adopted national strategies and non-legislative instruments, however, there is still a long way to go. Legislative measures in many cases focus only on certain points, such as food donation and safety. A great achievement is that every Member State has measures in relation to consumer information in place, for example date-marking, education on storage of food and meal planning. Education in schools is a crucial component in many countries.

The integration of the waste management hierarchy might be possible in some national measures, but further support is needed. Some Member States support collaboration with different stakeholders (e.g. dialogue formats, voluntary agreements) and fund innovative



approaches and research on food waste measurement and the potential of AI and integrate it in other policy areas.

The current pandemic shows the impact of panic buying, however, some Member States raised awareness and encouraged responsible shopping, as well as the support of food donations.

4. Dissemination of the EU guidelines on food donation

As part of the Circular Economy Action Plan, in 2017 the European Commission adopted the EU guidelines on food donation in order to facilitate the recovery and redistribution of safe, edible food to those in need. Developed in consultation with the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, the EU guidelines on food donation seek to:

- **facilitate compliance of providers and recipients of surplus food** with relevant requirements laid down in the EU regulatory framework (e.g. food safety, food hygiene, traceability, liability, VAT, etc.);
- **promote common interpretation by regulatory authorities** in the EU Member States of EU rules applying to the redistribution of surplus food.

A subgroup of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, dedicated to the issue of food donation, supports the Commission's work in this area and facilitates sharing of experience and best practice amongst Platform members – FEBA is a member of this subgroup.

Moreover, FEBA took part in the Pilot Project: Food redistribution in the EU – Analysis of the existing frameworks and dissemination opportunities promoted by the European Commission (Directorate-General of Health and Food Safety – DG SANTE). In this framework, between 2019 and 2020, FEBA organised **10 stakeholders' dialogues**.

The aim was to disseminate the EU guidelines on food donation at national level and promote a dialogue on food donation between the national Food Banks, public authorities and players of the food supply chain.

FOOD NO WASTE

European Food Banks:
concrete answers for the people, for the planet

- Rome (Italy) / 16-17 May 2019
- Vienna (Austria) / 10 September 2019
- Bucharest (Romania) / 14 October 2019
- Dublin (Ireland) / 13-14 November 2019
- Athens (Greece) / 12 December 2019

FEBA Virtual Event on the occasion of the 1st International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste / 29 September 2020

Food, no Waste: food donation in **Czech Republic** for the people, for the planet
 Food, no Waste: food donation in **Denmark, Norway & Sweden** for the people, for the planet
 Food, no Waste: food donation in **Estonia** for the people, for the planet
 Food, no Waste: food donation in **Italy** for the people, for the planet
 Food, no Waste: food donation in **Malta** for the people, for the planet

3. A stronger Social Europe

1. COVID-19: FEAD to continue supporting people in need

In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, on 2 April the **European Commission** adopted an ambitious proposal for a Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII Plus) Package which includes a proposal for amending the FEAD Regulation:

- It provides for sufficient flexibility for Member States to **adjust the schemes of support to the current context**, including by allowing **alternative schemes of delivery** e.g. through electronic vouchers and by allowing Member States to **amend certain elements of the operational program** for the distribution of food/basic material assistance (FEAD OP I) without requiring an adoption by Commission decision.
- All FEAD expenditure for operations fostering crisis response capacities in the context of the Coronavirus outbreak are **eligible as of 1 February 2020**.
- It is possible to provide the necessary **protective materials and equipment to partner organizations** outside the technical assistance budget.

- It also allows **Member States to benefit from a higher co-financing (up to 100%)**, upon their request, for the next accounting year (1 July 2020-30 June 2021)
- It includes **specific provisions** regarding the eligibility of costs incurred by beneficiaries in case the delivery of food/basic material assistance or social inclusion assistance is delayed as well as for suspended and not fully implemented operations.
- Finally, it reduces administrative burden for Member States, allowing them to focus on the response to this crisis, by providing lighter monitoring, audit and control requirements during this period.

In fact, on Friday 17 April 2020, the European Parliament adopted the additional measures so that EU funding could be granted immediately and with exceptional flexibility to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The specific measures for addressing the outbreak of COVID-19 amending Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 were published on the Official Journal of the EU on 24 April 2020. The Regulation entered into force on 25 April 2020.



On Friday 17 April 2020, the European Parliament adopted the additional measures so that EU funding could be granted immediately and with exceptional flexibility to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.



Finally, on 23 April 2020 the Council adopted these new rules intended to minimise the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the most deprived EU citizens. The amendments to the regulation on FEAD will make it easier for Member States, partner organisations and other parties involved to access the fund and protect their staff engaged in distributing the aid. Around 13 million EU citizens benefit from the fund each year.



Access
the FEAD
Report



FEBA and some of its members actively take part in the FEAD Community and FEBA is also a member of the Advisory Group. On the occasion of the First Annual Conference of the FEAD Community (22-23 October 2020), FEBA published a new report: FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation – 2019 Implementation Report.

To foster the dissemination, the report is translated in 11 languages: Czech, Dutch, Estonian, French, Greek, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish.

2. REACT-EU: to tackle local effects of COVID-19



On 23 December 2020, the “**Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe**” (REACT-EU) was adopted. REACT-EU is a **cohesion policy proposition** under the recovery package NGEU that aims at supporting Member States in recovery and beyond.

€47.5 billion will be released in order to provide support and foster crisis to the regions hardest hit by the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences. The additional funds will be made available in **2021 (€37.5 billion)** and in **2022 (€10 billion)**. REACT-EU provides total flexibility for Member States to decide the share of resources for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), which includes also the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), and the most important for Food Banks: the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

(Figure right) Provisional REACT-EU allocation per Member State for 2021 (M€)

Gross allocations before deduction of administrative expenditure and technical assistance

	2018 prices	Current prices
 Belgium	245	260
 Bulgaria	413	438
 Czechia	790	838
 Denmark	168	178
 Germany	1,785	1,894
 Estonia	168	178
 Ireland	84	89
 Greece	1,616	1,715
 Spain	10,269	10,898
 France	2,926	3,105
 Croatia	541	574
 Italy	10,693	11,348
 Cyprus	105	112
 Latvia	199	211
 Lithuania	259	275
 Luxemburg	132	140
 Hungary	834	885
 Malta	105	112
 Netherlands	417	443
 Austria	207	219
 Poland	1,556	1,651
 Portugal	1,508	1,600
 Romania	1,252	1,329
 Slovenia	248	263
 Slovakia	583	618
 Finland	127	135
 Sweden	272	288
Total	37,500	39,795

3. A new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The total budget for the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) under the new MFF 2021-2027 accounts **€87.9 billion** in 2018 prices. The ESF+ integrates the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) as well as other funds (the former European Social Fund, the Youth Employment Initiative and the Employment and Social Innovation Programme).

The ESF+ negotiations between the three EU institutions are still ongoing, especially thematic concentration remains a topic of discussion. In relation to the goal of food and basic material assistance within the ESF+, the Commission proposed a 2% earmarking, which is supported by the Council of the EU. The European Parliament however aims for 3% on top of the 25% for social inclusion. During the trilogue meetings in December, no agreement could be reached, so the next **negotiations continue under the Portuguese presidency in 2021**, hopefully reaching an agreement in January 2021. Anyway, there will be no disruption due to the reinforcement through REACT-EU and the eligibility is set on 1 January 2021, so that even when programmes are implemented later, the expenditures can be recovered.

4. Child Guarantee: Commission proposal in early 2021

More than a quarter of European children are at risk of poverty or social inclusion (Eurostat, 2020). Already in 2015, the European Parliament called for a child guarantee that would allow every child in the EU to have access to free education, healthcare, early childhood education and care and **adequate nutrition**. The final report of the feasibility study (2020), launched by the European Commission suggested that the optimal EU action would entail a Council Recommendation on the child guarantee.

Commission President von der Leyen 2019 Political Guidelines announced the adoption of a Child Guarantee to ensure that every child in Europe has access to the “most basic of rights like healthcare and education”. The Commission aims at putting forward a **policy proposal in Q1 2021** under the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In order to be able to do so, the European Commission launched a public consultation in 2020, in which FEBA took part. Read the position paper here. FEBA also participated in a strategic stakeholder meeting on 26 November 2020, where the preliminary findings of the consultation, as well as possible policy proposals were discussed.

FEBA EU Working Group / Meeting Reports

FEBA EU Working Group Meeting Report / 19-20 February 2020

Working together with the new European Institutions

On 19-20 February, the first 2020 FEBA EU Working Group took place in Brussels. For the occasion, 10 participants from 9 different countries (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Slovenia and Spain) took part in the Working Group Meeting which was the occasion to start working together on the new European Commission' proposals and keep on sharing information and planning actions for future policies (e.g. European Social Fund Plus).



The first day of the EU Working Group, participants had the chance to participate in two conferences. In the morning the Policy Dialogue “Fostering access to quality services. A shield against poverty” organized by Caritas Europa and the European Policy Centre. This conference was specifically organized for the publication of the report “Fostering access to services to support people to move out of poverty”.

The conference focused on the most important outcomes of the study conducted for the report. It mainly concentrated on the availability, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of services to people experiences poverty and the promotion of social inclusion in European countries. People experiencing poverty seem to face bigger difficulties accessing services than the ‘average’ citizens. When they do have

access, the support the service provides is less helpful to them because the offer is standardized and oriented towards the 'average' citizens instead of adapted to the specific needs of people facing hardship.

The report formulates a set of recommendations for the EU to address these challenges and to increase the positive impact of service provision, also to the most deprived members of our societies.

In the afternoon, FEBA EU Working Group participated in the Conference *"The next level of FEAD: exploring innovative tools to support Europe's most deprived"* hosted by MEPs Brando Benifei (S&D, Italy - Shadow Rapporteur ESF+) and David Casa (EPP, Malta - Rapporteur ESF+). The conference was organized by **Edenred** and **European Social Network (ESN)** with the aim to investigate new possible ways to implement the FEAD. The two MEPs opened the conference underlying the firm and unite position of the European Parliament in the ongoing negotiations that should find an agreement with the Council of the EU by the end of 2020. MEP Brando Benifei underlined that the European Parliament will not accept a lower budget for the next MMF 2021-2027.



The first panel focused on the new FEAD implementation and expectations on the delivery mechanism. In this panel, Loris Di Pietrantonio (DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission) underlined the importance to find a way to help people in the most effective way while thinking about the new ways of delivering food and material assistance in the future framework of the ESF+.

In relation to the proposal to deliver food and material assistance through the use of electronic vouchers and cards, many pros and cons can be recognized and carefully analyzed. Panelists presented some case histories on the utilization of electronic vouchers and cards through Edenred in Malta, and some experiences from the municipalities of Athens, Brescia (Italy) and Zagreb (Croatia).



On the second day, FEBA EU Working Group continued at the FEBA HQ. The main objective was to give participants an update and a general overview about all the changes and new proposals after the European general elections of May 2019 and the entry into force of the new European Commission and European Parliament.

The new European Commission was appointed by the European Parliament on 27 November 2019 and by the Council on the 29 November 2019 by written procedure and it will run till the 31 October 2024.

The Commissioner of DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) is **Stella Kyriakides**, from Cyprus, while the Commission for DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG SANTE) is **Nicholas Schmit**, from Luxembourg. The EU Working Group continued, with a focus on the new **European**

Political Guidelines “*A Union that strikes for more*”, published some days after the appointment of the new European Commission where the **new European Green Deal** was announced together with a new commitment to implement the **European Pillar of Social Rights** and the **EU Child Guarantee**.

The three main proposals of the new Commission are the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Communication on Strong and Social Europe for Just Transitions. The New European Green Deal is divided in six policy areas and one of them – sustainable industry – is particularly focused on the New Circular Economy Action Plan (which will be published before the end of 2020).

In January, the European Commission opened a public consultation and FEBA participated to actively contribute to the New Circular Economy Action Plan as regards the topic related to the daily-activities of Food Banks in Europe.

In relation to the New Circular Economy Action Plan, the Farm to Fork Strategy for Sustainable Food will contribute to achieving a circular economy model. In fact, it will aim to reduce the environmental impact of the food processing and retail sector by taking action on transport, storage, packaging and food waste. In fact, the strategy will

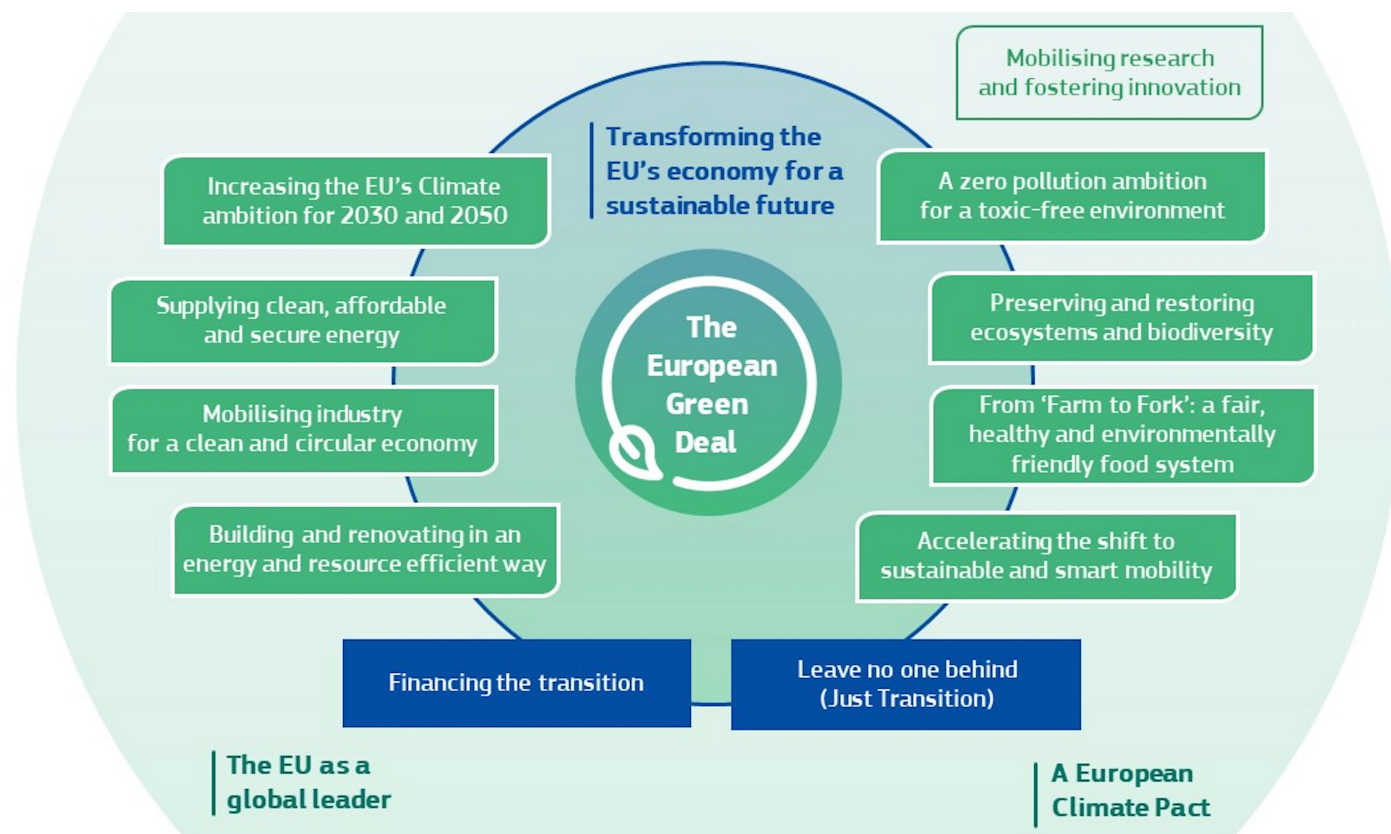
set out how to ensure sustainable production, stimulate sustainable food processing, hospitality and food services’ practices, promote sustainable food consumption, facilitating the shift towards healthy and sustainable diets and reduce food loss and waste. During the panel, participants agreed that FEBA will draft a feedback for the consultation on the Farm to Fork Strategy and after inputs and suggestions by its members will submit its position. After the phase of the public consultation, the Farm to Fork Strategy will be released.

After a general wrap-up of all the new challenges at the European level for Food Banks, the DAY 2 of the FEBA EU Working Group continued with an open discussion on the next programming period 2021-2027. The EU Member States started preparing new Structural and Cohesion Funds programs for the above-mentioned period and they should involve all the relevant stakeholders of the national institutional and economic-social sector. Moreover, the EU Working Group had also the objective to collect in-depth evidence on the operation of e-vouchers in the different Member States in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of these schemes.

Food Bankers can give an important contribution on this topic, with concrete experiences and expertise. The conference at the European Parliament on the 19 February on electronic vouchers and FEAD was therefore the opportunity to understand better the context of the new ESF+ provisions in order to advocate effectively with the EU institutions.

In this challenging period in the Brussels decision-making arena, FEBA together with its EU Working Group and its membership will closely follow all the developments concerning the EU Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the new Circular Economy Action Plan, and above all the future of the ESF+ and FEAD.





FEBA EU Working Group Meeting Report / 9 June 2020

On 9 June, the second 2020 FEBA EU Working Group took place online with almost 40 participants, including 23 Food Bankers from 19 countries and policy officers from the European Commission (specifically from DG Health & Food Safety and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and from the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policy.

The EU Working Group was the occasion to take stock of the latest developments at EU level especially regarding the **Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27**, the **recent amendments on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)** and the progresses on the **new European Green Deal** and the **Farm to Fork Strategy** released on 20 May 2020.

The online meeting started with an introduction made by FEBA Secretary General, Angela Frigo, who gave an overview on the activity of European Food Banks during Covid-19 emergency period and their extraordinary responses to cope with the food and social emergency. In Europe in the last 3 months the COVID-19 crisis has brought not only grief and suffering but also a new food emergency. The demand for food has increased up to 50% compared to the pre-coronavirus period. The outlook for the coming months is certainly not better. In 2019, Eurostat estimated that 5.6% of the population (around 24 million people) in the European Union were severely materially deprived.

31.5%

Share of the population unable to face unexpected financial expenses (EU level, 2019), Source: Eurostat



Now millions more people are in need and for the first time they are asking for help to put something to eat at the table. Due to the crisis caused by COVID-19, it can be expected that in 2020 the trend of severely materially deprived people will dramatically rise.

Europe is facing a new poverty and the social crisis is in front of us. The coronavirus crisis poses specific risks for charitable organizations and the most deprived and unparalleled challenges for the management of food emergency and the redistribution of surplus food.

In this context, the meeting of the EU Working Group was the occasion to have a dialogue with representatives from the European Commission and national institutions to start working together for the challenges of a post-Covid Europe.

EU support to the Most Deprived: recent developments and future perspectives



Jan Behrens

*Policy Officer, DG Employment,
Social Affairs & Inclusion, European
Commission*

Jan Behrens opened his presentation underlying the fact that we are facing an unprecedented challenge and the target group of the most deprived is increasing together with the demand of food aid. He focused his presentation on the latest developments of the

1. **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived and the**
2. **Multiannual Financial Framework and updates on the**
3. **European Social Fund Plus.**

1. Objectives of the FEAD Covid-19 amendments



In April 2020, amendments to the Common Provisions Regulation and the FEAD Regulation came into effect, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and growing needs.

The most important objectives of these recent developments are:

- Ensure the most deprived continue to receive FEAD assistance in a safe environment.
- Enable Managing Authorities, partner organizations and other actors to react quickly to the emerging additional needs of the target groups.



To ensure a quick and effective response to Covid-19 outbreak

- Modification of key elements of the OP I not subjected to COM decision (only notification) – **Article 9(4) FEAD.**
- Expenditure for operations for fostering crisis response capacity to the COVID-19 outbreak is eligible as from 1 February 2020 (including when the OP must be amended) – **Article 22(4) FEAD.**



Provide protective materials and equipment to partner organizations (Article 26 (2) (a))

Rationale:

- Enables buying protective equipment for partner organizations outside technical assistance.
- Allows continuation of traditional delivery schemes in safe environment.

✓ Providing flexibility and liquidity

→ Eligibility for suspended operations and operations that cannot be fully implemented (Articles 26a, 26b, 26c)

Rationale:

- Introduce specific provisions regarding the eligibility of costs incurred by beneficiaries in case the delivery of food/basic material assistance or social assistance is delayed as well as for suspended and not fully implemented operations.
- Differentiation between FEAD OP I, OP II and Technical assistance operations.

→ Co-financing rate of 100% on Member State request (Article 20(1a))

- Applicable for the accounting year 2020-2021, provided that the programme amendment is approved by the Commission at the latest before the submission of the final application for an interim payment.
- Requires a programme amendment.
- Only on request by Member State.

→ Lighter control and audit trail requirements (Article 30 (1a))

Rationale:

- Reduce administrative burden; provide flexibility for compliance with certain management and control requirements (e.g. audit trail requirements during confinement periods).
- Based on an analysis of potential risks.
- Applies only to FEAD OP I type programmes.

2. The EU budget powering the recovery plan for Europe Repair and prepare for the Next Generation

New long-term budget and recovery plan

#EUBudget #StrongerTogether



On 27th May 2020, the Commission proposed a stronger EU budget to address the immediate economic and social damage brought by the coronavirus pandemic. It can be seen as a kick start of a sustainable recovery and protect and create jobs.



It foresees an emergency **Next Generation EU Recovery** instrument of **€750 billion** to temporarily boost the financial firepower of the EU budget with funds raised on the financial markets.



A reinforced **Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 (€ 1.1 trillion)** to channel investment quickly to where needed most, reinforce single market, step up cooperation in areas such as health and crisis management, and equip the Union with a long-term budget to drive the green and digital transitions and build a fairer and more resilient economy.

A. React-EU Initiative / Crisis response and repair measures

Amendments to the 2014 – 2020 regulations

- Adding more than EUR 58 billion for the years 2020-2022 will provide vital, rapid, and additional support.
- Amounts can be used by MS for ESF, ERDF and FEAD programmes (existing or new programmes).
- Amounts will be distributed between EU countries according to their level of prosperity and the socio-economic effects of the crisis.

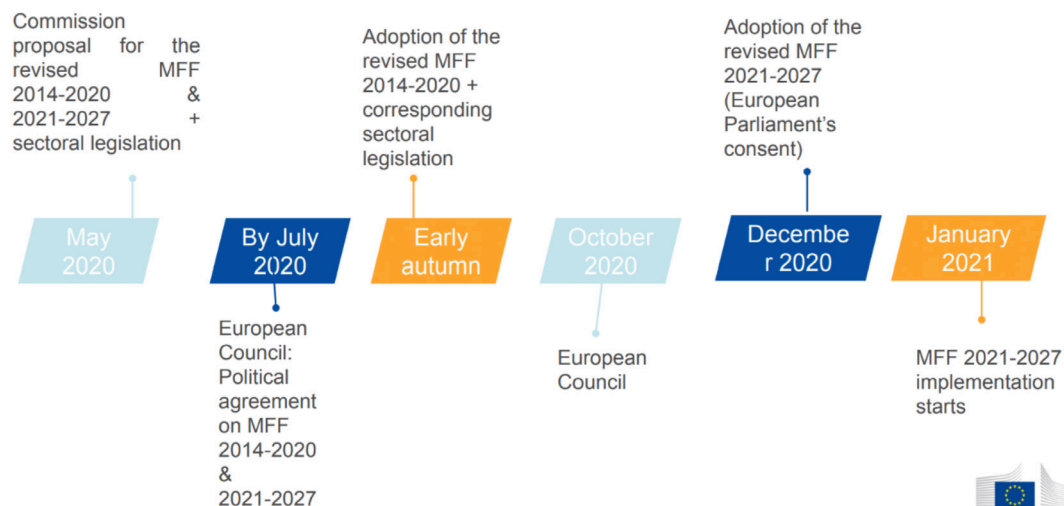
B. Amendments to the FEAD Regulation

- EU Member States can give additional support to the most deprived who have been hit disproportionately.
- The additional resources under the REACT-EU initiative may be used for FEAD programmes (for 2020 to 2022) (voluntary decision by MS).

Access the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 as regards the introduction of specific measures for addressing the COVID-19 crisis.



Timeline



Budget



€97 332 282 000

in current prices

€96 571 282 000

ESF+ strand under shared
management

€761 000 000

EaSI strand

3. Commission proposal on the ESF+

A. ESF+ support for addressing material deprivation (specific objective xi)

- Ensures continuation of support provided by the FEAD in 2014-2020 to OP I: **addressing material deprivation through food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived, including accompanying measures.**
- Objective of the merge: **to promote synergies between ESF and FEAD support, whilst preserving lighter rules for FEAD-type support.**

B. ESF+ support to social integration of the most deprived (specific objective x)

- May ensure continuation of support provided by the FEAD in 2014-2020 to OP II: now part of a broader specific objective x – **“promoting social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived and children”.**
- In “duly justified cases”, addressing the most deprived under specific objective (x) counts for 2% minimum allocation to address material deprivation.
- In ESF+ proposal, this falls under Chapter II, general support of the ESF+ strand under shared management (already in 2014-2020 many of the simpler rules only applied to OP I).
- Common provisions apply throughout.

C. ESF+ programming state of play

- Spring 2019: informal dialogue with Member States started.
- November 2019: COM letter to Member States on partnership and transparency.
- Q3-Q4 2020: expected submission of Partnership Agreements and programmes.

Farm to Fork Strategy: what's in for Food Banks?



Anne-Laure Gassin

Policy Officer, DG Health & Food Safety, European Commission

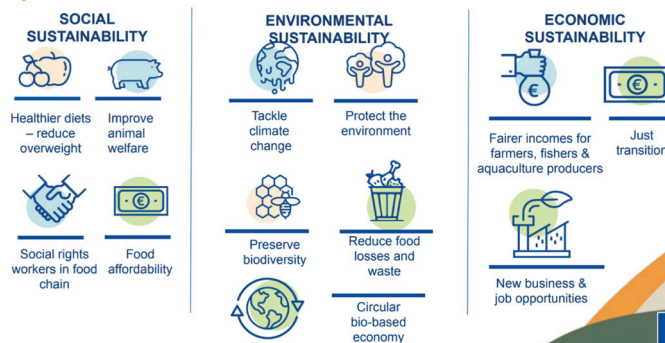
On 20 May 2020, the European Commission adopted a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy, and environmentally friendly food system (F2F Strategy) as called for by the European Green Deal. The strategy proposes that the EU lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork, protecting human and planetary health as well as the livelihoods of actors in the food value chain. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated how crucial a well-functioning food system is for our society and that a food system cannot be resilient if it is not sustainable.

Anne-Laure Gassin highlighted the relevance of the new Farm to Fork Strategy for Food Banks explaining that:

- The strategy sets out to address all 3 dimensions of sustainability - the establishment of a sustainable food system must address the social dimension as well as the environmental and economic.

- Food security** remains a cornerstone of sustainable food systems – ensuring that everyone has access to sufficient, nutritious, sustainable food.
- Food systems transformation requires driving out **food loss and waste**: importance of prevention and social dimension of food recovery and redistribution.
- The strategy highlights **crucial role of Food Banks' partners** (food industry, retail, hospitality and food services) in meeting sustainability goals and upholds a **collective approach** (public/private sectors) in the transition to sustainable food systems.

1. Challenges to the EU food system



2. F2F Strategy: overall goals



- Reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the food system
- Lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork
- Tap into new opportunities
- Create a robust and resilient food system

The F2F Strategy will be implemented through an integrated approach, including different levels of governance and multiple instruments such as: legislation and regulation, financial incentives, education, research and innovation, procurement, and voluntary commitments.

To step up efforts to prevent food loss and waste across the EU, the F2F Strategy proposes to: set EU-level targets for food waste reduction (proposal by 2023)

- Revise EU rules for date marking (proposal by 2022)
- Investigate food losses at production stage and explore ways of preventing them
- Scale up action and mobilise key players, notably by promoting uptake of the recommendations of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), European Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy. The approach of a Member State



Milena Battaglia

Technical Secretariat, Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policy

Milena Battaglia started her presentation taking some preliminary considerations. First of all, Covid-19 crisis has reminded us that food production and the food supply chain are the basis of every economic system and therefore they must be protected, together with the access to food even in difficult situations and conditions.

As demonstrated in this period, pandemic has produced surpluses and at the same time the social and economic crisis generated by this situation, brought millions of people in a state of poverty all around Europe.



In this context, the continuity of food production by the supply chain, but also the recovery of surplus food, must be implemented to cope with these aspects.

Italy, for example, in this emergency period has activated a National Food Emergency Fund to feed the poor and to use surplus food. For the future, it is **necessary to strengthen common tools for the management of food emergencies and for the recovery of surplus food.**

In the current scenario, there are documents and practices that could give a framework of action:

The “**Recommendations of actions for the prevention of food waste**” written by the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and released on 12 December 2019.

It proposes many actions for the prevention and use of surplus food and to tackle food waste in the different sectors of the agri-food supply chain. This document involves many different stakeholders: the whole agri-food supply chain, charitable organizations such as the Food Banks, and public institutions.

These recommendations can be also a useful document to decline the objectives expressed by the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Moreover, also the next CAP includes part on social purposes and must decline the principles of Farm to Fork Strategy.

In Italy some actions have been already implemented. For example, **Law No 166/2016**, the so-called Gadda Law, encourages the **recovery of surplus food for social purposes, establishing a table to tackle food waste and foster food aid** (member of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Waste) with representatives from supply chain, the national fund for the most deprived, the national fund against food waste and the observatory to monitor the use of surplus food. These instruments at national level are fundamental pillars to build concrete actions.



In relation to the **Farm to Fork Strategy** and the new **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**, it is important to consider:

1. Organizations recovering and redistributing surplus food for social purpose as an integral part of the agri-food chain

and not merely as an option, because they recover surplus food and they give a concrete contribution to the improvement of the efficiency of the food supply chain leading to prevent food waste. This is an important step of a true circular economy.

2. Increasing the quantity and typology of food products that can be recovered

Within the CAP, fruit and vegetables can be redistributed to charitable organizations. With similar measures, other products could also be recovered and redistributed through the CAP.

3. Increasing the capacity to recover surplus food

For example, financing the transformation of surplus food. In this way, in the event of

market crises and when surplus food occurs, the organizations such as Food Banks could recover a bigger quantity of food products.

4. Sharing surplus food

The possibility to exchange surplus food between Food Banks, even between different countries, should be studied, analyzed, and fostered as much as possible.

5. Improving logistics and storage capacity

To make food recovery and redistribution more efficient, Food Banks should be in the best possible position and should benefit of optimal conditions. Evaluations should be made, and new measures and tools studied.

6. Thinking about a European Fund for the rapid redistribution of surplus food

A quick intervention mechanism could be useful during a market crisis or exceptional events like the COVID-19. It is necessary to rethink a new intervention system.

At national level, the Farm to Fork Strategy is an opportunity to fight food waste and recover surplus food for the benefit of the most deprived citizens in the EU. In this context, a common and joint work is needed between the European Commission and all the stakeholders and Member States to explore the opportunities of the Farm to Fork and the CAP.

In this challenging period, European Food Banks Federation, together with its members, will closely follow all the developments in the Brussels decision-making arena advocating for the interest of European Food Banks in this challenging and changing context.

FEBA Extraordinary EU Working Group Meeting Report / 22 July 2020

On 22 July, the day after the special European Council of 17-21 July 2020, FEBA decided to organise an online extraordinary meeting of FEBA EU Working Group with almost 20 participants from 12 Food Banks.

The goal of this meeting was to take stock of the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government and coordinate the next steps for Food Banks at European level.

Programming period 2014-2020



The objective was to understand the status of art in the different countries in relation to the implementation of the new specific measures of FEAD to address the Covid-19 crisis (amending Regulation (EU) No 223/2014), and the level of awareness of the “Recommendations for Action in Food Waste Prevention” released by the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste at the beginning of December 2019.

Recommendations for Action in Food Waste Prevention

Developed by the EU Platform
on Food Losses and Food Waste

12 December 2019



FEAD



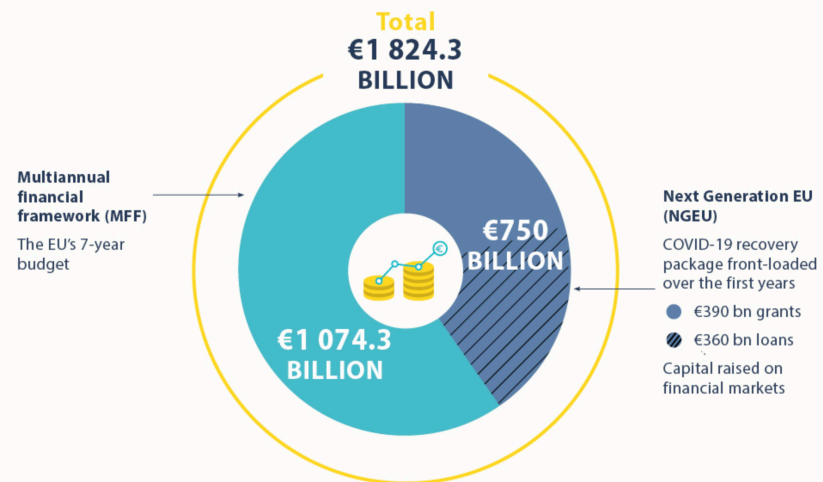
European Council adopted conclusions on the Recovery Plan and Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027

In the second part of the meeting, Angela Frigo – FEBA Secretary General – presented to participants the most important points emerged at the European Council in particular in relation to **REACT-EU Initiative**, the **MFF 2021-2027** and the **Farm to Fork Strategy**.

On 21 July 2020, the European Council adopted conclusions on the recovery plan and Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027. The COVID-19 crisis presents Europe with a challenge of historic proportions. The EU and its Member States have had to adopt emergency measures to preserve the health of the citizens and prevent a collapse of the economy. Based on the extensive consultations held at the level of the President of the European Council and the work done in the Council, the conclusions present a balanced solution catering for the interests and positions of all Member States.

It is an ambitious and comprehensive package combining the classical MFF with an extraordinary Recovery effort destined to tackle the effects of an unprecedented crisis in the best interest of the EU.

EU expenditure 2021-2027



The Next Generation EU (NGEU) and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) go together. The Recovery effort is needed as a quick and effective answer to a temporary challenge, but this will only yield the desired result and be sustainable if it is linked to and in harmony with the traditional MFF that offers a long-term perspective.

1. Next Generation EU

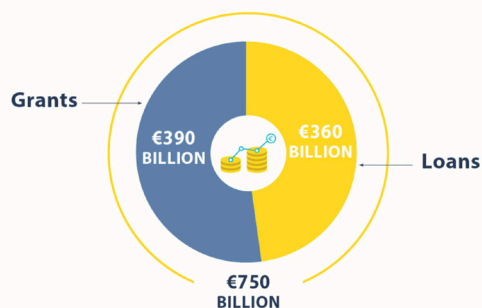
For the NGEU the Commission shall be empowered in the Own Resources Decision to borrow funds on the capital markets on behalf of the Union up to the **amount of EUR 750 billion** in 2018 prices; new net borrowing activity will stop at the latest at the end of 2026. The Union shall use the funds borrowed on the capital markets for the sole purpose of addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

→ **The funds borrowed may be used for loans up to an amount of EUR 360 billion and for expenditure up to an amount of EUR 390 billion.**

Read the full Conclusions of the Special meeting of the European Council (17-21 July 2020) and have a comprehensive overview on the decisions taken



Next Generation EU-COVID-19 recovery package



- Capital raised on financial markets
- Repayment period until 2058

”

There is a serious risk that the number of people suffering from food and material deprivation will increase and therefore further action is required in order to respond to the social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure socially fair recovery in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights.

2. REACT-EU Initiative

A. Key Points

- EUR 47.5 billion for the years 2020-2022
- Amounts can be used by Member States for ESF, ERDF and FEAD programmes (existing or new programmes)
- Amounts will be distributed between EU MS according to their level of prosperity and the socio-economic effects of the crisis
- EU MS can give additional support to the most deprived who have been hit disproportionately

B. The European Commission encourages Member States to use REACT-EU resources

In letters to EU Ministers responsible for Cohesion policy, **Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Elisa Ferreira, and Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, clarified how Member States can make use of the REACT-EU fund.** The fund is part of Next Generation EU and will focus on supporting labour market resilience, jobs, SME's and low-income families, as well as laying down future-proof foundations for the digital and green transitions and a sustainable socio-economic recovery.

The Council agreement is not the end of legislative process, but to ensure a speedy recovery in light of the coronavirus crisis, **it is important Member States proceed with a swift programming of resources.**

”



Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms package

The resources under REACT-EU will be of crucial importance over the coming 3 years for the recovery of the economy hit by the effects of the coronavirus crisis. Our advice to Member States is to use this opportunity most effectively and efficiently to build a solid, green, digital and cohesive recovery.

”



Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights

REACT-EU will be a major resource in tackling challenges related to jobs and social inclusion following this unprecedented time of upheaval. The Commission stands ready to support Member States in maximising its added value.



For a rapid deployment of REACT-EU, Member States should follow the Commission's recommendations provided in the letters: target the geographic areas whose economy has been hit the hardest by the pandemic and that are the least resilient; take into account European Semester country-specific recommendations; and respect the partnership principle.

Access the letters to EU Ministers



3. Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

A. Key Points

→ Allocation of funds will be based on NUTS level 2 regions and GDP

- **less developed regions** (GDP per capita < 75% average GDP of EU-27)
- **transition regions** (GDP per capita is between 75% and 100% average GDP of EU-27)
- **more developed regions** (GDP per capita above 100% average GDP of EU-27)

→ Co-financing rates will vary from 85% to 40% depending on the regions

”

Higher co-financing rates for priorities supporting innovative actions and for support for the most deprived under ESF+ may apply.

€1,074.3bln

€87,995mln

ESF+ budget

€87,319mln
Shared management

- 25% social inclusion of which 2% material deprivation
- 10% NEET

€676mln
(In)direct
management

Employment and Social
Innovation strand

B. ESF+ / Future opportunities

→ Food and material basic assistance

- Directly
- Indirectly through electronic vouchers or cards

→ Simplified costs for food donations

It could have a huge impact on the possibility to implement the use of funds for food and/or basic material assistance to cover the costs for food donations in an effective and efficient way in the future European Social Funds Plus (ESF+).

Conclusion

The FEBA Extraordinary EU Working Group concluded with some important save the dates for FEBA members for the upcoming months. In fact, the objective of this meeting was to provide members of FEBA EU Working Group with an overall view on the main challenges of today and tomorrow and to set a common workplan to advocate both at EU and national level for the interests of the European Food Banks in the upcoming months and year.

Access the
presentation given
during the meeting



Acknowledgement

The European Food Banks Federation takes this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission for concretely supporting the capacity building in engaging in the EU of FEBA and its membership.

A grateful acknowledgement to all the speakers, external experts, officials of the European Commission for actively participating in the meetings organised both in presence and online.

Last but not least, many thanks to all the participants of the FEBA EU Working Group for their engagement both at national and European level in this challenging year. It is a privilege to work with and for you and we hope to do so today and for years to come.



European Food Banks Federation asbl – FEBA

Chaussée de Louvain 775
Brussels 1140, Belgium

+32 2 538 94 50

info@eurofoodbank.org



@EuroFoodBanks



@EuroFoodBanks



eurofoodbanks



European Food Banks Federation



eurofoodbanks



eurofoodbank.org

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