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Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

1 JULY – 31 DECEMBER / 2021

On July 6 the European Parliament welcomed the Prime Minister of Slovenia Janez Janša for his presentation of the programme of activities of the Slovenian Presidency. The Minister discussed several issues, including extensive debates on the rule of law, media freedom, Fit for 55, migration, digitalisation and the EPPO (European Public Prosecutor's Office). The Slovenian Presidency will focus on digital and green reforms and the future of Europe.

Prime Minister Janša recalled the various crises that the EU has experienced over the last few years, ranging from financial issues, to migration, Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which has forced the European Union to act more strategically and focus on foreign policy.

Under the slogan “**Together. Resilient. Europe.**”, the focal point of the Slovenian Presidency will be recovery and resilience, translating ambitious green goals into binding legislation, strategic autonomy, the digital transition, rule of law and the protection of external borders.

Priorities

1. The resilience and recovery of the European Union. A strategically autonomous European Union
2. The Conference on the Future of Europe
3. A union of the European way of life, the rule of law and the same criteria for all
4. A credible and secure European Union. A union that is capable of ensuring security and stability in its neighbourhood.



Some highlights

“The COVID-19 emergency has reminded us of the strategic importance of food supply in the EU. **One of the objectives of the Slovenian Presidency will be to make a shift towards treating agriculture as a critical and strategic sector that must provide secure, adequate, sustainable, and resilient food supply in accordance with the strategic guidelines set out in the Farm to Fork Strategy.**

That is why, as part of the fundamental priority to build a stronger and more resilient EU, **food supply will be included in the efforts to improve the EU’s crisis management system.** The strategic role of agriculture, improved exchange of information, and coordinated action to ensure the security of food supply in times of crisis, will be the themes of the debate on the **European Commission’s communication on the contingency plan to ensure food supply and food security, which will be moderated by the Slovenian Presidency**”.

FEBA is involved in the Expert Group on the Contingency plan to ensure food supply and food security as an observer.

Agriculture and fisheries priorities of the Slovenian Presidency:

Considering the general commitment to the implementation of a climate neutral, green, fair, and social Europe, the Slovenian Presidency will continue to promote sustainable food chains, agriculture and fisheries.

Particular focus will be on:

- Guaranteeing food supply and the integrity of food supply chains in times of crisis, animal welfare and plant health.
- **European Green Deal:** promoting the transition of agriculture and the entire food chain, including the fisheries sector, to more sustainable production and processing practices.
- **The Farm to Fork Strategy:** the Slovenian Presidency will also support discussions in the areas that touch on the processing of food, the position of farmers in food chains, transport, the sale of foodstuffs and consumer attitudes towards healthy food.
- **The global United Nations Food Systems Summit**, which will address the importance of the transformation of food security systems, the mode of production, the processing and the consumption of food.

- The **reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**: which aims to increase the environmental and climate change ambitions of the CAP, will be the main tool for achieving the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy.
- An important priority for the Slovenian Presidency’s work on **food** will be **origin labelling**, in response to changing consumer expectations.

Health, Employment and Social Affairs priorities of the Slovenian Presidency:

- The European Pillar of Social Rights and the action plan for its implementation is a central guideline for the EU and its Member States in their work to improve working and living conditions across the union.
- The Slovenian Presidency will continue the discussion on strengthening social Europe, focusing on the implementation of the commitments agreed at the social summit in May 2021 in Porto

To have more information you can visit the [dedicated website](#).

Click [here](#) to read the programme of the Slovenian Presidency.



United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 / Pre-Summit

26-28 JULY / 2021

From July 26 to 28, the Pre-Summit of the UN Food System Summit took place in Rome as a hybrid event. It aimed at supporting the achievement of the overall objectives by taking stock of the progress level reached on the road towards the envisaged accomplishment regarding data gathering, the SDGs, and public engagement. Announced by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as a 'people's summit', it envisioned to be open for participation of all relevant stakeholders, among them indigenous peoples, farmers, politicians, and civil society to acknowledge their needs and ideas.

To reach the main goal of a sustainable, global **transformation of food systems**, a list of sub-objectives has been pursued:

- **Pooling of ideas** to distil priorities and elaborate on a common vision
- **Mobilisation of financial contributions** of public and private actors
- **Incentivise ambition and leadership** on the part of governments and additional key figures
- **Strengthening the community spirit** among states, constituencies, and stakeholders beyond national borders
- **Forming of new inter-group action coalitions** with concrete commitments.

During the three-days event, a compilation of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and statements including a wide range of participants from more than 100 countries covering diverse topics took place. Among others, H.E. QU Dongyu, Director of the FAO, and Dr. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UNEP, debated the action required to achieve the global 2030 SDG ambitions.



Prof. Joachim von Braun, Chair of the Food Systems Summit Scientific Group, delivered framing remarks on the goal of zero hunger, while Mr. Nigel Topping, High Level Champion for Climate Change at COP26 and Race to Zero, laid out his view regarding possibilities to start a 'Decade of action for Food, Climate and Biodiversity Goals'.

- The entire programme overview can be accessed [here](#). Additionally, several affiliated sessions were organised, tackling topics such as Indigenous Peoples' food systems, agroecology, or the interplay between hunger, famine and the food system.
- Click [here](#) for an overview.

Register for the UNFSS!

While the pre-summit already shed light on the most significant challenges, the **United Nations Food Systems Summit will eventually be held virtually on September 23, 2021**. Click [here](#) to register.



**DRIVEN TO WASTE:
THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF
FOOD LOSS ON FARMS**



WWF Report: “Driven to Waste: The Global Impact on Food Loss and Waste on Farms”

In July 2021, the [World Wildlife Fund](#) (WWF) published a report on the estimated food waste on farms in collaboration with the grocery retailer Tesco. By giving a concise overview on relevant figures, they contribute to the task of **quantifying the volume of food loss and waste throughout the entire supply chain**, i.e. from farm to fork. This endeavour is of challenging nature given the difficulty of accurate measuring resulting in a general prevalence of underestimation. Hence, food loss at farm stage is an often overlooked but substantial problem stemming from a variety of factors:

- **Produce left on fields** due to overproduction, quality issues, or cancellation
- **Diseases and injuries** affecting animals and plants
- **Deficient / inadequate techniques** impacting animal welfare and crop quality
- **Suboptimal on-farm processing and transportation**
- **Storage problems**

Key figures:

- A total of **1.2 billion tonnes** of food, **15.3% of the entire produce** and **worth 370 million US\$**, goes to waste on farms annually, which exceeds the amount lost in the stages of retail and end consumption.
- **4% of the emitted anthropogenic greenhouse gas** stems from farm stage food waste. Hence, any increase in losses translates into an increase in emissions.
- **58% of food lost at farm-stage** is attributed to North American, European, and Asian countries with middle- and high-income levels.
- **4.4 million km² of landmass annually**, exceeding the

size of the Indian subcontinent, is utilised to produce food that never leaves the farms.

Key messages:

- **Prevalence of misconceptions.** It is a common assumption that the loss of produce is first and foremost a problem in countries using little technology when it comes to farming and storage practices. However, per capita food losses on farms are more extensive in industrialised regions in comparison to rural areas, meaning that on-farm mechanisation is not a panacea for reduction.
- **Lack of concrete milestones.** The loss and waste of food stands in sharp contrast to the intent to improve environmental health and to combat food insecurity and malnutrition. SGD 12.3 envisages to reduce post-harvest losses by 2030, yet does not set targets regarding any waste at the earliest production stage.
- **Action is needed throughout the whole food chain.** A multitude of market and socio-economic factors must be tackled in both low- and high-income countries.

The current gap between farmers and the end market provokes uncertainties regarding, among others, the types and production volume of crops.

The issue must be placed higher on the agenda of national governments, multilateral institutions, and NGOs. Currently, the focus lies on post-retail waste, especially in affluent states.

Awareness on part of the public is crucial to shape the consumers' mindsets towards more conscious choices.

You can access the full report [here](#).



Summary of the annual implementation reports for the operational programmes co-financed by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in 2019 / Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament

On 30 August 2021, the European Commission published the *REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Summary of the annual implementation reports for the operational programmes co-financed by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in 2019*.

Referring to 2019, hence the period before the COVID-19 pandemic, the document gives a concise overview on the progress in implementing the operational programmes of the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)**. In a nutshell, the instrument that has been set up to tackle the different facets of the worst forms of poverty, particularly childhood poverty, homelessness, and food deprivation, proved to be flexible and functional, leading to similar data analysis results as in 2018.

Key figures of 2019:

- **EUR 608 million** were available for distribution among the Member States
Payments to beneficiaries decreased slightly (from EUR 762.2 million in 2018)
Payment applications increased significantly (from EUR 346.4 million in 2018 to 663.9 million in eligible public spending in 2019)
- **26 Member States** continued to receive FEAD support
22 used the resources to distribute food and/or basic material assistance (OPI in the table below)
4 ran social inclusion programmes (OPII)

| OP | Type of assistance | Member State |
|-------|--------------------|---|
| OP I | Food | BE, BG, EE, ES, FI, FR, MT, PL, PT, SI (10) |
| | Basic material | AT (1) |
| | Both | CY, CZ, EL, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, SK (11) |
| OP II | Social inclusion | DE, DK, NL, SE (4) |

Source: SFC2014

- **12.2 million people** received food and **800.000** were supplied with material assistance. An additional group of **30.000** benefited from social inclusion support.
France showed the largest increase in end recipients (+ 450.132 from 2018)
17 Member states report a reduction, particularly significant

in Italy (- 594.297 from 2018)

- As previously, **49%** of beneficiaries were women, **30%** children, **10%** migrants, people with a foreign background, or minorities and **7%** homeless persons.
The share of children grew slightly, in some Member States they accumulate to up to 92% of the end recipients
- Nonetheless, an estimated number of **107 million people** is still living at the brink of social exclusion and poverty, especially children and disabled persons.
- With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic likely to exacerbate the situation, there is growing concern on a substantial increase in poverty.

Specific details:

- **Food aid** remained generally stable:
55% of food aid consisted of dairy products and starchy products such as bread or potatoes. The proportion of convenience food has been relatively low (9%).
Apart from Cyprus, all **21 food-distributing Member States** provide it as standardised food packages. Some additionally offer meals, e.g., to schoolchildren or the homeless.
- **Basic material assistance** increased 42% from 2018 to EUR 19.2 million
The main distributed products remained to be school supplies and personal care products for families with children
- **Accompanying measures** carried out by Member States included advice on food preparation and storage, healthy nutrition, finances or personal hygiene, physiotherapy, and educational and leisure activities, among others.
- **Social inclusion measures** were carried out by e.g., Germany and the Netherlands, focussing on newly-arrived people and the homeless or the elderly, respectively.

Obstacles to implementation:

- **17 Member States** reported obstacles to the programme implementation, for instance related to logistics, the end recipients, capacity shortages or legal difficulties. They resulted in procurement problems and delays in aid delivery.
- Given the Fund's flexibility and close cooperation between the management entities and partner organisations, many hurdles could be surmounted successfully.

General principles:

- According to the report, the Member States monitor the accomplishment of the principles, which entail the complementarity of funding, anti-discrimination, gender equality, avoidance of food waste, a balanced diet, public health, and environmental and climate-related aspects. They generally state to have complied with them.

Evaluation of FEAD:

- Those seven Member States that evaluated the FEAD activities predominantly provided positive feedback, confirming the effectiveness and functionality of the instrument. They further made valuable recommendations that can be taken into account for the next period starting in 2021.

Future EU Developments:

The rules for the operation of the FEAD programme are changed by the two **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives (CRIIs)**, which have been adopted in April 2020. All crucial stakeholders are now empowered to respond quickly to emerging challenges, and can, for instance, distribute food aid and material assistance through vouchers.

As component of the *Next Generation EU* recovery scheme, in December 2020, the **Recovery Assistance for Cohesion**

and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) entered into force, providing extra resources and enabling Member States to extend the FEAD with additional resources.

FEAD will become a part of the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** for the 2012-2027 MFF in order to improve synergies. A concomitant new regulation requires 25% of the ESF+ shared management strand to be used for the purpose of social inclusion improvement, while at least 3% per Member State must be utilised to address material deprivation.

Additionally, a **European Child Guarantee** will be created to stipulate the right to affordable early childhood education, good quality care and protection from poverty. Moreover, **Member States are encouraged to support access to healthy meals, ensure nutrition standards and provide information to parents and children, and limit the advertisement and availability of unhealthy groceries.**

To receive more detailed information, download the document [here](#) (in all EU official languages).

As stated in the *FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation. 2019 Implementation Report* (available [here](#)): 12 FEBA members benefited from FEAD in 2019 (BE, CZ, ES, EE, FR, EL, IE, IT, LT, PL, PT, SK), supporting 5 million people.



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