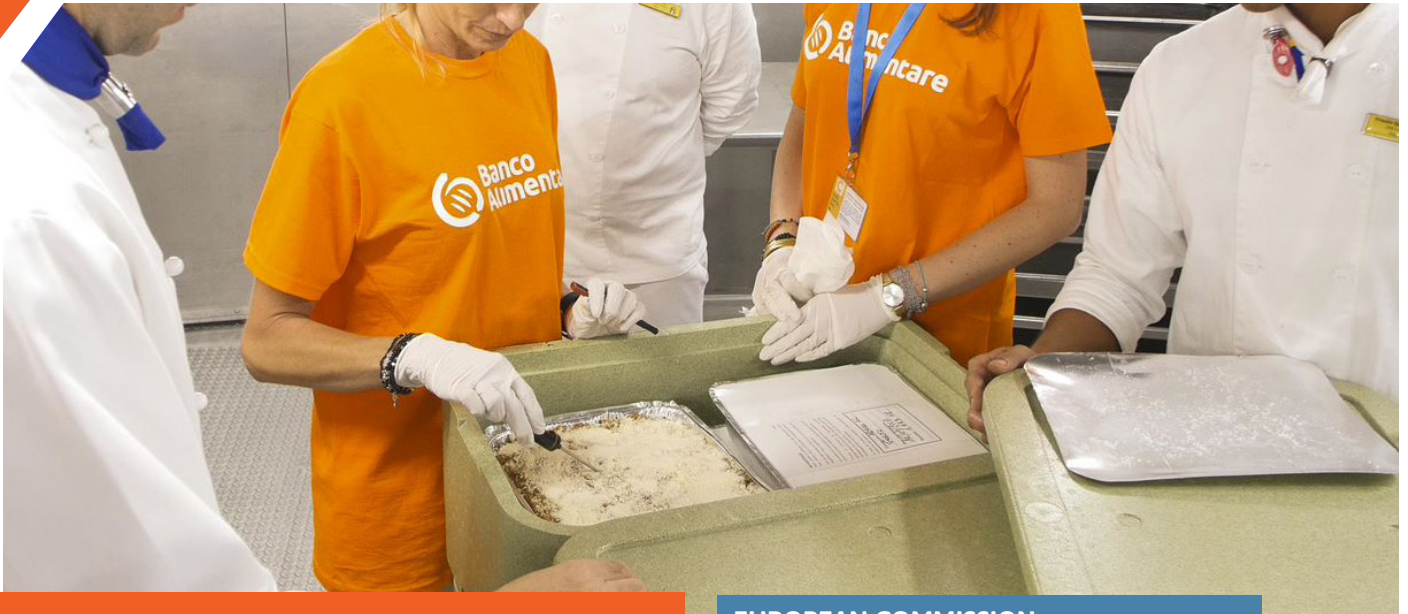


FEBA

EU Monitoring

MARCH / 2021



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Facilitating food redistribution whilst ensuring food safety through changes to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004

3 MARCH / 2021

The European Commission revised the [Regulation \(EC\) No 852/2004](#) on food hygiene with the aim to improve food safety in the EU, by bringing EU standards into line with new international standards ([WHO Codex system](#)), ensure appropriate food safety measures are taken when food is donated for charitable causes and reduce food waste, as part of the [European Green Deal](#).

On 3 March 2021 the [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2021/382](#) was adopted with the aim of amending the Annexes to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs as regards

food allergen management, redistribution of food and food safety culture.

The amendments concern, in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs, a new chapter on food redistribution that addresses how the 'use by' and 'best before' dates shall be applied in the context of food redistribution, while not jeopardising food safety and which aspects shall be taken into account when assessing food safety.

This Regulation entered into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union (24 March 2021).

It is a Regulation, therefore a binding legislative act. It must be applied in its entirety across the EU and Member States should modify their national legislation, if needed.

The Regulation is available in all EU languages [here](#).



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



The European Pillar of Social Rights – turning principles into actions

4 MARCH / 2021

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit. The Pillar sets **out 20 key principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems in the 21st century**.

The Pillar is structured around three chapters: (1) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; (2) Fair working conditions; (3) Social protection and inclusion.

The Commission has already presented several actions deriving from the Pillar, such as the European Skills Agenda (Principle 1), the Gender Equality Strategy (Principle 2), the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (Principle 3), a Youth Employment Support package (Principle 4) and a proposal for a Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages (Principle 6).

In the same week as the Pillar Action Plan, the Commission is adopting a proposal for a Directive on Pay Transparency (Principle 2) and a new Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2030 (Principle 17). More upcoming EU actions in 2021 will include, among others, the **European Child Guarantee** (Principle 11), a new Occupational Safety and Health strategic framework (Principle 10), an initiative to improve the working conditions for people working through digital platforms (Principles 5 and 12), and an Action Plan for the Social Economy.

The new impetus on social rights will use and reinforce the momentum created by the ambitious €1.8 trillion EU long-term budget and Next Generation EU recovery instrument.

They will provide EU funding opportunities to Member States to support a strong Social Europe. This includes support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility to fund coherent packages of reforms and investments that respond to the labour market, skills and social challenges identified in the country-specific recommendations of the European Semester.

The [Porto Social Summit](#), organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU in May 2021, will focus on how to strengthen Europe's social dimension to meet the challenges of a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery, and the green and digital transition. The Summit will be an

occasion to rally forces to renew, at the highest political level, the commitment to implement the Social Pillar. The Pillar Action Plan constitutes the Commission's contribution to the Porto Social Summit.

The Pillar Action Plan builds on a broad **public consultation** with more than 1.000 written contributions from Member States, EU institutions and bodies, regions, cities, social partners, civil society organisations, international organisations, think tanks and citizens. In addition, the Commission held dedicated webinars with over 1.500 individual stakeholders.

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan

On 4 March 2021, the Commission set out its ambition for a strong Social Europe that focuses on jobs and skills for the future and paves the way for a fair, inclusive and resilient socio-economic recovery. The [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) outlines concrete actions to further **implement the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights as a joint effort by the Member States and the EU, with an active involvement of social partners and civil society**. It also proposes employment, skills and social protection headline targets for the EU to be achieved by 2030.

This is an opportunity for Europe to update its social rulebook, while successfully navigating the transformations brought about by new societal, technological and economic developments and by the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. The Commission has already started to put the Pillar's principles into action, proposing initiatives such as Youth Employment Support and Adequate Minimum Wages in 2020. Today the Commission is also presenting a [Commission Recommendation on Effective Active Support to Employment following the COVID-19 crisis \(EASE\)](#), to support a job-rich recovery.

Executive Vice-President for An Economy that Works for People, Valdis **Dombrovskis**, said: "Our economic recovery must be inclusive, fair and job-rich. That is why the Commission is proposing an ambitious agenda for implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and inviting Member States to actively support employment in the recovery phase following the COVID-19 crisis. With this, we want to signal the importance of a gradual transition from emergency to recovery policies for our labour markets, which the EU will support through its available funding sources - including the ESF+ and the Recovery and Resilience Facility." ([Full speech](#))

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas **Schmit**, said: "The European Pillar of Social Rights has been our reference point for building a strong social Europe. Now we breathe new life into it, turning its principles into actions. Creating jobs is one of our main priorities, and making sure people have the right skills for those jobs. This is the objective of EASE. We also have a collective duty to combat poverty in the EU and create an inclusive society. We all have a role to play. I look forward to a renewed commitment to social rights at the Social Summit in May."

EU targets for a common ambition by 2030

The Action Plan sets **three headline targets** for the EU to be achieved by 2030:

1. **At least 78%** of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment.
2. **At least 60%** of all adults should participate in training every year.
3. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be **reduced by at least 15 million**.



The new 2030 headline targets are consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and set the common ambition for a strong Social Europe. Together with a **revised Social Scoreboard**, they will allow the Commission to monitor Member States' progress under the European Semester. The Commission invites the European Council to endorse these three targets and calls on Member States to define their own national targets to contribute to this effort.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste – Speech by Commissioner Kyriakides

18 MARCH / 2021

The 10th meeting of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste was held virtually on 18 March 2021 and provided the opportunity to discuss recent developments in food loss and waste prevention across the EU, as well as on an international level. The meeting kicked-off with an opening statement by EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides.

Related documents:

- Read more on the Platform's meeting [here](#)
- Visit the website of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste [here](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues,

*I am delighted to join you today to kick off this virtual meeting of the **EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste**.*

*We are meeting as the world continues to grapple with an unprecedented health crisis, which is taking a heavy toll on the economy and society. **The European Green Deal is at the centre of our efforts to emerge from this current crisis and to build back better with a green and sustainable recovery.***

Our EU Farm to Fork Strategy and efforts to establish a sustainable EU food system are essential in this. And EU targets to reduce food waste will be important to deliver on

the Strategy's ambition. All of us – the EU, Member States, businesses and consumers – have a stake in tackling food waste.

*To better prepare Member States for a sustainable recovery and underpin their commitments to green and digital transitions, **the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility will offer large-scale financial support for investment and reforms. Here, Member States have a golden opportunity to include food loss and waste prevention in their recovery plans. And I would urge businesses to take similar steps. Member States and businesses can also be part of the action to reduce food loss and waste, thanks to the "target – measure – act" approach.***

With **EU-wide monitoring of food waste levels**, we will be able to set targets to reduce food waste across the EU and drive progress towards the target under the Sustainable Development Goals to cut food waste in half by 2030.

The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste remains relevant. It has helped guide our work at EU level and has inspired further action on the ground in the Member States. We can all be proud of the important milestones we have reached together.

This year's **UN Food Systems Summit is a chance to promote a global transition to sustainable food systems** – and reducing food waste is a key focus. To stop wasting food, we must stop wasting time. Ahead of the Summit, we are working with international partners to define impactful actions for countries, companies and consumers worldwide. Households are the largest contributors to food waste around the world, and the EU is no exception. It therefore makes complete sense for consumers to be closely involved in transforming our food system. **We will engage with citizens through dialogues to seek their input for the Summit's deliverables, including solutions for cutting food waste.**

We could also avoid food waste if it were easier for consumers to understand what the dates marked on their food mean. To help with this we will propose revising EU rules on date marking by next year. Our legislative proposal will draw on consumer behaviour research and an impact assessment, which will include public consultations. I hope this Platform will contribute with its input.

Last but not least, we will run a pilot project called the European Consumer Food Waste Forum. This will see a network of researchers and practitioners develop an evidence-based collection of best practices to reduce consumer food waste.

Ladies and Gentlemen, We are not yet on track to meet the collective ambition we signed up to in the Sustainable Development Goals. That is why **we need concerted action by both public and private actors, across the food supply chain**. It is also why we welcome the **FAO's initiative to develop a voluntary code of conduct on food loss and waste reduction for all relevant stakeholders**. Building on this, as part of the Farm to Fork Strategy, we are developing **an EU Code of Conduct for responsible business and marketing practices**. This can include commitments to prevent food loss and waste.

Transforming our food system will require innovative solutions. For this, we will make support available from a range of EU instruments, such as the LIFE Programme, Single Market Programme, Horizon Europe, and entrepreneurship programmes by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen, This shows just how relevant the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste remains. It has helped guide our work at EU level and has inspired further action on the ground in the Member States. We can all be proud of the important milestones we have reached together.

We now have a chance to build on this excellent work. Because this year, the Platform will have its mandate extended for five more years. As a result, it will continue to play an instrumental role in scaling up action to reduce food loss and waste across the EU. **Its key recommendations will continue to show the way forward for all concerned.** With your help, we will fine-tune the new Platform's role and aims, making it better equipped to support all players in taking effective action to reduce food losses and waste.

Thank you for your work and for making the Platform an example of best practice. I look forward to seeing it make an even more impactful contribution.

European Child Guarantee

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Commission proposes action to uphold child rights and support children in need

24 MARCH / 2021

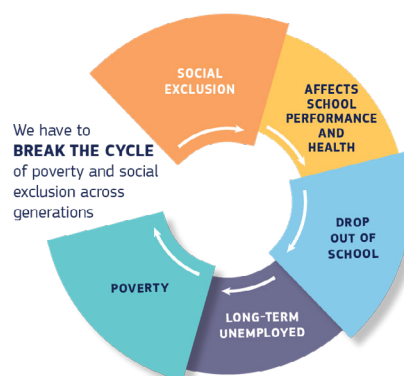
On 24 March the European Commission adopted the first comprehensive [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), as well as a [proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee](#), to promote equal opportunities for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In preparation of both initiatives, the European Commission, in association with leading global child rights organisations, collected the views of over 10.000 children.

Background

President **von der Leyen** announced the **European Child Guarantee in her Political Guidelines for 2019-2024**. The European Child Guarantee complements the second pillar of the Strategy on the Rights of the Child. It is also a **key deliverable of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**, adopted on 4 March 2021, and answers directly to Principle 11 of the Pillar: Childcare and support to children. **The Action Plan proposes a target for the EU to reduce by at least 15 million the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 2030, including at least 5 million children.**

The new European Child Guarantee

In 2019, almost **18 million children in the EU (22.2% of the child population) lived in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion**. This leads to an intergenerational cycle of disadvantage, with profound and long-term effects on children. The European Child Guarantee aims to break this cycle and promote equal opportunities by guaranteeing access to a set of key services for children in need (under 18 year old at risk of poverty or social exclusion).



Under the European Child Guarantee, it is recommended to Member States to provide **free and effective access** for children in need to:

- **early childhood education and care** – for example, avoid segregated classes;
- **education and school-based activities** – for example, adequate equipment for distance learning, and school trips;
- **at least one healthy meal each school day**; and
- **healthcare** – for example, facilitating access to medical examinations and health screening programmes.

The Commission also recommends that Member States provide children in need with **effective access to healthy nutrition** and **adequate housing**. For example, children should receive healthy meals also outside of school days, and homeless children and their families should have access to adequate accommodation.

When identifying children in need and designing their national measures, Member States should take into account the specific needs of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as those experiencing homelessness, disabilities, those with precarious family situations, a migrant background, a minority racial or ethnic background or those in alternative care.

EU funding to support these actions is available under the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which finances projects that promote social inclusion, fight poverty and invest in people, as well as the European Regional Development Fund, InvestEU, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica, said: "This new EU comprehensive Strategy on the Rights of the Child is a milestone in our work for and with children. We thank each and every child for their contribution to this important initiative. It sends a message of hope and it is a call to action throughout the EU and beyond. With this Strategy, we renew our commitment to build healthier, resilient and equal societies for all, where every child is included, protected and empowered. The politics of today and tomorrow are made both for and together with our children. This is how we strengthen our democracies."

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, said: "Even before the pandemic, 22% of children in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This should be unthinkable in Europe. Over the past year, these pre-existing inequalities have become even greater. We need to break this dangerous cycle and make sure that children in need have access to a healthy meal, education, healthcare and adequate housing, no matter their background. The Commission stands ready to support Member States in any way it can to make a real difference to children's lives."

Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, said: "Every child in the EU is entitled to the same protection and access to key services, regardless of their background. Yet 1 in 3 children in the EU have experienced some form of differential treatment. From unequal access to digital technology or socio-economic support, to a lack of protection from abuse at home, far too many children need additional help. The new strategy we are presenting today is a plan to provide this."

Next steps

The implementation of the EU Strategy will be **monitored at EU and national levels, and the Commission will report back on progress at the annual EU Forum on the Rights of the Child**. An **evaluation of the strategy will be conducted at the end of 2024**, with the participation of children.

The Commission calls on Member States to swiftly adopt the proposal for the Council Recommendation establishing a **European Child Guarantee**. Within **six months after its adoption, governments are encouraged to submit to the Commission national action plans on how to implement it**. The Commission will monitor progress through the European Semester and issue, where necessary, country-specific recommendations.

For more information:

- [Webpage](#) & Factsheets: [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#) & [European Child Guarantee](#)
- [Questions and Answers](#)
- [Press release "Children speak up about the rights and the future they want"](#)
- Our Europe. Our Rights. Our Future. Report in [full](#) / Summary Report [here](#)
- [Latest information on the European Pillar of Social Right Action Plan](#)
- EU Strategy on the rights of the child: [Child friendly version](#)



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

FEAD, REACT-EU and ESF+ – Written answers

25 MARCH / 2021

The **new Multiannual Financial Framework** provides for an increase in the budget allocated to the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) that includes a programme of aid for those most in need. In addition, **Member States will be able to mobilise funding from the REACT-EU programme to support the fight against poverty.**

However, existing programmes mainly provide food and material assistance to vulnerable people, or raise awareness about good quality food, but do not provide financial assistance for goods storage in the event of an increase in inventories as a result of an increase in the number of people in need during a health and financial crisis.

- *Is the Commission aware of this situation?*
- *Does it plan to provide financial support to help associations rent or acquire premises in order to store goods?*
- *If no direct financial support is planned, which other mechanism does the Commission recommend?*

Answer given by Mr Schmit (Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights) on behalf of the European Commission

The **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)** is successfully delivering assistance in 27 Member States, complementing national efforts to address material deprivation and combat poverty and social exclusion. Since 2014, roughly 13 million people on average have benefited each year from its assistance.

The Commission is aware of the constraints faced by associations and organisations in the delivery of aid to the most deprived during the current COVID-19 pandemic. In order to address this, the following Commission initiatives, which have been endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council, enable national authorities and partner organisations to continue providing aid to the most deprived in the current difficult situation.

Firstly, under the **Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe initiative (REACT-EU), Member States have the possibility to increase the resources allocated to the FEAD.** Secondly, the **FEAD Regulation was amended** in order to adjust the eligibility rules to the current context. **The storage costs incurred by partner organisations are eligible for support under FEAD.** These costs, together with other costs borne by partner organisations, are reimbursed on the basis of a flat rate. Thirdly, Member States may use **technical assistance to reinforce the capacity of partner organisations.** As FEAD is implemented under shared management, it is up to the Member States to decide on the measures to be put in place to assist partner organisations in the delivery of support to the most deprived. Finally, under the **European Social Fund Plus, the flat rate for reimbursing the costs for partner organisations, including storage costs, will be higher (7% instead of 5%).** This will allow to cover increased costs by partner organisations.



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