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G20 /COP26 on food security, food waste and sustainable food systems

Issues around finding sustainable solutions to meeting food security were raised to global prominence in the previous month at both [G20](#) and [COP26](#). The **G20 Leaders' Summit**, taking place at the end of October, focused more closely on **food security** with the final [G20 Rome Leaders Declaration](#) inviting all stakeholders to join the **Food Coalition** launched by the **FAO** to address the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition. The stated intention to foster "sustainable and resilient" food systems had a major focus on increasing support for smallholder farmers, but also intends to do so through reducing food loss and waste along the food value chain. Although this did not contain much detail, it is a welcome addition when G20 communiqués rarely would tackle the issue of food security in as much detail.

On the other hand, many commentators voiced alarm at the apparent **low priority COP26 was going to dedicate to agriculture and food systems** given that **food production contributes one-third of global carbon emissions**, but wasn't given a dedicated sectoral day. It however indirectly still received a lot of attention and notable new commitments as a result of attention on deforestation with focus on agricultural commodities driving deforestation and land degradation.

The most highly publicised of this was the commitment by over 100 countries to end deforestation by 2030, including Indonesia and Cote d'Ivoire, major commodity exporters to Europe. This [Glasgow Declaration on Land Use and Forests](#) was a high level commitment and does not prescribe how signatories will meet these goals however. A more detailed commitment indicates the first steps that most governments will likely take – 28 governments, representing 75% of global trade in forest risk commodities, delivered a [Roadmap from the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue](#)

(FACT) to deliver sustainable trade. Finally, 26 governments committed to the [Policy Action Agenda for the Transition to Sustainable Food and Agriculture](#) that outlines various actions state and non-state actors can take to support sustainable agriculture and healthy diets. The focus of the actions is much more on **improving the sustainability of food systems** than direct food security, but would achieve improvements in food security nonetheless, for example, **improving monitoring of food waste**.



JRC Food waste indicators now reported in the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring System

On 21 October 2021, indicators of *food waste by food category* and *food waste along supply chains* have been added to the [EU's Bioeconomy Monitoring](#), hence recognising the importance of reducing food waste as a key priority EU Member States should seek to progress on. More importantly, the report delivers on a longstanding promise **to ensure food waste reduction is reported consistently across the Union**.

The [EU Waste Framework Directive](#) that entered into force in November 2008 introduced **an obligation on Member States to report on food waste generation and progress** thereof. However, the legislation being drafted as an EU directive meant national governments adjusted the text accounting for their national specificities, and inconsistencies in the data reporting remained. Over recent years, efforts have gone into the **harmonisation of reporting requirements across the EU**, with the establishment of a common reporting methodology and standardised obligations developed by the [European Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC). **EU countries are expected to report data on food waste for reference year 2020 by 30 June 2022**.

Two indicators included:

1. *food waste along supply chains* which details each stage of the food supply chain such as primary production, processing and manufacturing, retail and distribution, food services, and household consumption. It provides a consistent picture across EU 27 Member States that large majority of food waste occurs at the consumption level; and
2. *food waste by food category* indicator however is less conclusive with wastes of food products varying significantly across member states.

Through the **publication of food waste data on the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring System**, the JRC delivers on a **political promise to ensure food waste management improves across all EU jurisdictions**. It elevates the issue to landmark metrics used by the EU institutions to monitor progress on their measurable goals such as energy productivity, biomass

generation, or circular material rate. Political commitments in ensuring the issue of food waste is treated as a key priority were reiterated in the [New Circular Economy Plan](#) and in the recently released [Farm To Fork Strategy](#).

The data reported in the dashboard is based on estimations for the years 2000 to 2017 as computed by the JRC. The data is reported in nominal tonnages of food waste produced, which do now enable for fair comparison at relative level, such as per capita food waste. However, they offer benchmark for Member States to monitor progress against.



Save the Children report «Guaranteeing Children's future – how to end child poverty and social exclusion in Europe»

Save the Children, an international membership organisation, published a [report](#) with a set of **recommendations to fight child poverty in EU and non-EU countries**. As an organisation, Save the Children advocates for a right of children not to grow up in poverty. This aims to prevent the long-term impact of poverty on the lives of individuals, notably on their health.

The organisation found that the pandemic is likely to exacerbate the risk of precarity among children in every Member State, leading to more cases of eating disorders and to a lack of nutritious daily meal.

The report also scrutinises **factors** which put children at a higher risk of poverty, including single parent families, large families, low-income working families, and ethnic minority backgrounds. For Save the Children, **targeted measures are needed to support these children**. Such measures are, however, lacking. While some EU countries offer free school meals for children in need, none provides foods to those in 'vulnerable' situations.

Although many children still live below the poverty line, Save the Children argues that the European Union has been progressing thanks to recently adopted instruments aimed at coordinating both national policies and funds to fight childhood poverty. The key instrument is the [Child Guarantee](#) Council recommendation. This non-binding text aims to prevent children's social exclusion by upholding their rights and guaranteeing their access to key services, such as a healthy nutrition both at and outside of school. The next step is now to effectively implement the Children Guarantee recommendation.

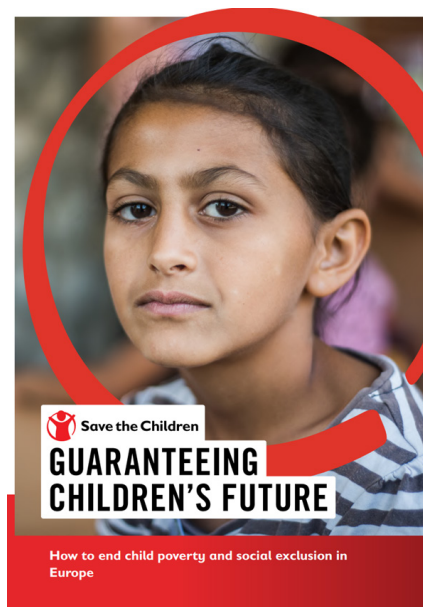
To do so, Save the Children recommends a set of **guiding principles**:

- Adopting a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to align EU-level children's poverty reduction

with national strategies to reduce poverty (i.e., through fighting gender inequalities, ...).

- Ensuring that 'vulnerable' children are also targeted by the anti-poverty measures.
- Monitor the implementation of the Child Guarantee recommendation by collecting appropriate data.
- Raise awareness about the existence of financial resources from EU and national funds.
- Guarantee the sustainability of the reforms to project them on the long run.

The implementation of the Child Guarantee recommendation is likely to be fragmented across EU Member States as each country approaches the fight against poverty differently. It will be important to engage at national level to influence the implementation of the recommendation on 'healthy nutrition'.





Farm to Fork conference and AGRIFISH discussions on food waste and food security

On 14 -15 October 2021 , the second annual [Farm to Fork Conference](#) was held. The various stakeholders, including the civil society organisations and public authorities, had the possibility to virtually exchange the views on implementation of the EU Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy. The conference was hosted by the European Commissioners for Health & Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel.

The European Commission provided an update on the conference during the [Agriculture and Fisheries Council](#) on 15 November emphasising the progress made to implement the Farm to Fork Strategy and achieve a global transition to sustainable food system. During the meeting, EU ministers reiterated support for the objectives of the strategy, in line

with the messages outlined during the October Agrifish Council. This was also the occasion to discuss the preparation of national Common Agricultural Policy ([CAP](#)) strategic plans, with ministers underlying in particular the need to always guarantee the primary CAP objective of food security.

The further discussion on the CAP will be held on 23 November, where during the European Parliament Plenary key debate on the support for strategic plans drawn by Member States, financing, management, monitoring as well as amendment of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) and other Regulations will be discussed.



Food waste targets consultation – feedbacks review

On 29 October 2021, the feedback period on the Inception [Impact Assessment on setting food waste reduction targets at EU level](#), a key element of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy. The European Commission outlined different policy options for the scope, measurement, expression, and establishment of the targets.

Scope:

- Option S1 - target covering the whole food supply chain, from farm gate to final consumer
- Option S2 - target covering only selected stages of the food supply chain (for example [SDG Target 12.3](#) sets targets at retail and consumer levels)

Expression:

- Option E1 - target expressed as % of food waste reduction from the amount of food waste in the baseline year (2020) to target year (2030)
- Option E2 - targets expressed as absolute amounts, i.e. in kilograms per capita per year to be achieved by 2030 (per country).

The way the targets are set for Member States:

- Option T1 - the same target level for all Member States
- Option T2 – target level differentiated by Member State
- Option T3 – collective target on EU level – based on MS contributions

FEBA's feedback underlined the importance of setting up an EU level target to drive Member States' efforts and approaches to reduce food waste, covering the entire food supply chain. While there is broad support across stakeholders on the need for the EU to ramp up efforts to achieve SDG Target 12.3, also through targets, diverging views have emerged during the consultation on the scope of them.

In particular, with the notable exception of the European Fresh Produce Association Freshfel, various trade associations representing the production segment of the supply chain (Copa Cogeca, AVEC – European Poultry and Meat Sector, Italian farmers associatoin Coldiretti, Europatat, SMEunited) argued in favour of an approach looking at only selected stages of the food supply chains, noting that most food waste takes place at the consumer stage. Larger players in the food sector and retailers (EuroCommerce) are more supportive of an approach capturing the entire supply chain, as suggested by FEBA.

Similarly to FEBA, FoodDrinkEurope also stressed the importance of date marking and the need to improve consumer understanding of 'best before' labels as another tool to prevent and address food waste.

A formal consultation is expected to kick-off towards the end of the year, with the view of tabling a proposal for a directive during the first half of 2023.





Contingency plan for food supply and food security in times of crisis

On 12 November 2021, the European Commission adopted the [contingency plan](#) as well as announced to establish the [European Food Security Crisis preparedness and response mechanism \(EFSCM\)](#). Following the COVID-19 crisis and as outlined in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the EU is aiming to address the coordination of the food supply chain during the crisis at the European level. The contingency plan considers the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on food production as well as other associated risks.

Firstly, the contingency plan acknowledges the overall resilience of the EU food supply chain, but it underscores the shortcomings and actions needed to improve the EU preparedness. While the [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)](#) and the [Common Fisheries Policy \(CFP\)](#) allows to tackle the market imbalances or producers' cash flow issues, the Commission acknowledged that further action is needed.

As the key tool to improve the preparedness in case of the food crisis the Commission outlined the need to establish synergies between the public (e.g., EU, national and regional authorities) and private sectors (e.g., farmers, fishers, traders).

Secondly, the **ECFSM**, coordinated by the Commission, will provide with the **set of actions between the mid-2022 and 2024**. The experts from the Member States and third countries will cover the links in the supply chain and provide with the procedures and rules in case of crisis. It is planned to use the available data and analysis to improve the preparedness as well as coordinate and cooperate to share the information and best practices.

The COVID-19 crisis showed the shortcomings that led to the disruptions in the medical and food supplies, therefore, the Commission aims to provide with the coordinate measures to maintain the supplies in the case of crisis.



FAO: UN agencies back bold plan to ensure that every child receives a regular healthy meal in school by 2030

In November 2021, **five United Nations (UN) agencies** declared their support for the [School Meals Coalition](#) consisting of over 60 countries. Envisioning the improvement

of nutrition, education, and health of children, the Coalition's objective is to ensure that every child is provided a healthy meal at school by 2030.

Pursuing this goal is of special importance given the immense impacts caused by the **COVID-19 pandemic** around the globe. As schools had to close to reduce the spread of the virus, **370 million** children not just lost the opportunity to learn but were also deprived of regular meals as well as essential health services. Going beyond the status quo before the pandemic, the Coalition strives at extending nutrition programmes both in terms quantity and quality in order to **supply healthy food to a greater number of children**. Besides fostering their **physical and mental development**, and thereby improving their **long-term wellbeing**, school meals are considered a stepping stone for the much-needed **food**

system transformation: If ingredients are sourced locally, this can translate into additional income for small-holder farmers and businesses and thus support the livelihoods of a wide array of people beyond the school environment.

The UN agencies, namely the [FAO](#), [UNESCO](#), [UNICEF](#), the [WFP](#), and the [WHO](#), announced to collaborate with governments by providing assistance on operational and technical tasks as well as data collection. In addition, a diverse set of 50 partner organisations including civil society actors and NGOs will contribute with their knowledge and experience to the achievement of the Coalition's objective.



11th meeting of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste – Taking stock of achievements thus far and future outlook

On 18 November 2021, the last meeting of the **EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste** (FLW) in its current mandate (2016-2021) took place as a hybrid event in Brussels and online.

In her [opening statement](#), Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, reiterated the importance of the fight against food losses and waste and the related relevance of the Platform and its activities. Following this, the past achievements, among them the [Recommendations for Action in Food Waste Prevention](#) released in 2019, have been summarised and details regarding the **future development** of the Platform during its new mandate (2022-2026) outlined. **FEBA was selected as one of the 45 members**, which comprise a diverse array of NGOs, trade and business associations, companies, and research institutions. New digital tools, such as the [EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#) providing data, news, and information as a one-stop-shop for stakeholders engaged in the topic, will play a decisive

role, also in regard to the reinforced focus on consumer food waste.

A synthesis of the results of the **Inception Impact Assessment on setting food waste reduction targets**, to which FEBA submitted a [contribution](#) as mentioned above, has been presented, highlighting the main positions as regards the different policy options. In a nutshell, reduction targets covering the whole supply chain, expressed in absolute amounts and as a collective target based on Member States contributions are preferred by the majority of responding actors. Moreover, a reduction level of 40 - 50% compared with the baseline year 2020 is supported by most. An open public consultation in the first quarter of 2022 constitutes one of the next steps on the roadmap towards the final Commission proposal.

As a further item on the agenda, an overview on **initiatives on food hygiene in view of food donations** has been given

focussing on [Commission Notice 2020/C199/01](#) providing guidance on food safety management systems for food retail activities, [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2021/382](#) on the redistribution of food, and [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1374](#) on the freezing at retail of products of animal origin. Additionally, the activities of the new [European Consumer Food Waste Forum \(ECFWF\)](#) have been elaborated on.

Besides other members of the FLW Platform, FEBA took the floor in the panel on **Implementing the Platform's recommendations for action in food waste prevention: actions taken throughout the food supply chain**, focussing the intervention on the contribution drafted on the occasion of the sub-group meeting of the [EU Platform FLW on Action and Implementation](#) on 27 October.



FAO: The State of Food and Agriculture report 2021

Suddenly confronted with the **COVID-19 pandemic**, countries around the world found themselves plunged into a state of emergency overnight. As agri-food systems struggled to cope with border closures and supply chain disruptions, what began as a **health crisis** became also a **food insecurity crisis** resulting in surging levels of hunger and malnutrition.

Picking up on this, on 23 November 2021, the FAO released its [The State of Food and Agriculture \(SOFA\) 2021](#) report, entitled "**Making agri-food systems more resilient to shocks and stresses**". Taking into account that food production has historically been vulnerable to extreme conditions caused by climate change, diseases, economic downturns, and armed conflict, the report assesses the potential national agri-food systems have to respond to and recover from crises.

Among others, the analysis shows that the **lack of economic access** to a healthy diet, which currently affects around 3 billion people, poses a threat to their food security. In the event of an income shock, people in low-income countries spending a large share of their earnings on foodstuff would be hit the hardest.

The FAO's [The State of Food and Nutrition 2021](#) report estimates that up to **811 million people are affected by hunger worldwide**. Envisaging to relieve their burden, the newly published SOFA report offers **evidence and guidance** on actions that can foster the capacity of agri-food systems to **continuously and sustainably provide safe and nutritious food in sufficient quantities**. Here, **diversification** of input sources, supply chains, markets, and production methods are considered essential. In the domestic sphere, the focus must be on the **protection of small and medium agri-food enterprises and small-scale farmers** as particularly vulnerable actors of the food supply chain. Governments are encouraged to support their organisation in order to enhance their competitiveness but also to address issues beyond agri-food systems to **improve health, education, and gender equality**, which are considered crucial underlying preconditions for building up crises resilience. An additional ingredient is **connectivity** allowing all stakeholders to quickly coordinate relevant resources and action. As a key message, the report highlights the importance of resilience for agri-food systems to be capable of responding reliably to future challenges of all kinds.



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