

FEBA EU Working Group 2021 REPORT

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Introduction

This report aims at giving a concise overview of EU and international policy developments in the areas that can affect the daily activities of FEBA Members, and a summary of the work carried out by the FEBA EU Working Group throughout this challenging year 2021.

Led by FEBA, the EU Working Group was established in 2018 and comprises **27 Food Bank representatives from 19 FEBA Members** (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain).

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the EU Working Group has never stopped its activity. Thanks to technology and online systems for conference calls the EU Working Group has continued to advocate both at EU and national level. From the beginning until the end of 2021, the objective of the EU Working Group was to convene a common position in one single voice and to set up a set of actions to promote the interests of FEBA and its members in the upcoming months and years.





FEBA EU WORKING GROUP: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

FEBA organised 9 online meetings with the participation of more than 160 Food Bankers and 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 key topics (e.g. REACT-EU).

FEBA and its EU Working Group drafted contributions for **2 open consultations** published by the European Commission on relevant issues and policies to play a pivotal role and position Food Banks at the core of the decision-making process.

FEBA contributed to 5 surveys promoted by the EU.



What's at stake at international and EU level?

The General Assembly of the UN proclaimed 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. The topic of food security, interwoven with food system sustainability, was placed In the top position on the international and European agenda. The momentum has been substantially fostered by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has put the food supply chain under enormous pressure.

While the EU's food system did not succumb to the crisisrelated pressure, the situation was different in other parts of the world, which stimulated high-level events and discussions. Among them it is worth mentioning the <u>UN Food Systems</u> <u>Summit</u> (23 September 2021), but also the <u>G20 Leaders' Summit</u> (30-31 October 2021) and <u>COP26</u> (31 October – 12 November 2021), where the importance of sustainable and resilient food systems was raised to global prominence.



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

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Significant quantities of fruits and vegetables that are perfectly fit for consumption are wasted along the food supply chain because of aesthetic or physical irregularities.

Access the dedicated website

FEBA's contribution to the international momentum

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THANK YOU FOR COMING See you next year! 04-06 Oct 2022

1 International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

With the aim of **raising awareness on the nutritional benefits of the consumption of fruit and vegetables**, the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 as the <u>International Year of Fruits and Vegetables</u>.

Recognising the important role of fruit and vegetables in a nutritious and healthy diet, FEBA supports initiatives that raise awareness about this topic and provides its members with more fruit and vegetables. Thereby, the huge potential to alleviate the co-existence of food insecurity, malnutrition, and food waste can be exploited.

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HIGHLIGHTS

<u>"Fruit and vegetables for human development: do not</u> <u>waste!</u>" – 7 September 2021 (Rimini, Italy)

Conference "International Year of Fruits and Vegetables" – **21 September 2021 (Bucharest, Romania)**

<u>Skill-sharing session "Food recovery from fairs"</u> - 5 October 2021 (Madrid, Spain)

Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion "Fruits and vegetables for human development: let's take action!"– **14 December 2021 (online)**

Learn more on FEBA's website

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2. UN Food Systems Summit

On 23 September 2021, the first ever <u>UN Food Systems Summit</u> took place as a virtual event, bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders eager to accelerate action to transform the current food systems on a global scale. Such a change is considered pivotal to achieve the 2030 Agenda for



<u>Sustainable Development</u> and meet the challenges posed by climate change.

FEBA Annual Convention 2021 *"For a sustainable future food system"*, was organised by the European Food Banks Federation in collaboration with <u>Česka Federace Potravinovych Bank</u> and took place online on 6-7 May 2021. The event was recognised as a <u>UN Food Systems Independent Dialogue</u> with the goal to offer opportunities for all participants to engage directly in proposing pathways towards sustainable food systems, explore new ways of working together, and encourage collaborative actions.

Discover more about FEBA Annual Convention 2021

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3. International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and waste

Since its first edition in 2020, FEBA has contributed to the <u>International Day of Awareness of Food Loss</u> <u>and Waste</u> on 29 September with the event **"Food, no Waste"**.

In 2021, FEBA invited its members to participate in a social media challenge motivating them to share the daily contribution of Food Banks to food waste prevention.

> Learn more about FEBA's challenge



EU Policy developments in 2021

Food first: preventing food waste for human consumption

 EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste: achievements and outlook towards the new mandate

Established in 2016, the **EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste** (Platform FLW) brings together key players from the public and private sector, ranging from EU institutions, to experts from the Member States, as well as relevant stakeholders.

The members of the Platform FLW aim to jointly contribute to the achievement of <u>SDG Target 12.3</u> ("By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses")¹ through working together to better identify, measure, and understand, as well as finding solutions to deal with food losses and waste.

FEBA has been a member of the Platform FLW for the mandate 2016-2021 contributing, together with its members, to many plenary sessions and sub-group meetings.



HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, FEBA was invited as speaker to the two **plenary sessions:**

18 March 2021: "How has the Platform and its recommendations supported your work on the ground?" - focusing on the implementation of the recommendations for actions at national level and the urgent need to increase awareness.

18 November 2021: "<u>Implementing the Platform's</u> recommendations for action in food waste prevention: food redistribution".

¹ United Nations, Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, 2015.



FEBA was selected as one of the 45 members for the Platform FLW's **new mandate (2022-2026)**, which comprises a diverse array of NGOs, trade and business associations, companies, and research institutions.

We would like to highlight that FEBA is proud for the trust of the European Commission understanding also the important responsibility of representing and bringing the voice of all FEBA Members at the Platform FLW.

Jacques Vandenschrik, FEBA President

For the mandate 2016-2021, FEBA was selected as a member of **two different sub-groups**:

- Food donation
- <u>Action & Implementation</u>

In addition, FEBA contributed to the drafting of the **EU food donation guidelines** and was the rapporteur for the food donation section of the **key recommendations for action in food waste prevention**

> Read more about EU's Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste

New digital tools, such as the EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub, launched on the International Day of **Awareness of Food Loss and Waste** on 29th September 2021, will play an Important role In reducing food waste In relation to the reinforced focus on consumer food waste. Being a "one-stop shop", users can access a broad range of resources, news, information on Member State policies, legislation, and action, as well as an events calendar. The Hub provides a digital environment for stakeholders to exchange experiences and knowledge, supporting the achievement of SDG **Target 12.3**.



To contribute to the Hub's data, FEBA collects information about its members' food waste prevention activities monthly and disseminates them via the **website**.

 Policy and legislative developments and initiatives

Facilitating food redistribution whilst ensuring food safety through changes to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and 853/2004

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and 853/2004 can be considered as cornerstones of food hygiene legislation in the European Union. While FEBA Members are committed to ensure the highest standard of safety to deliver wholesome food to charitable organisations and to their final beneficiaries, the most deprived, some rules may represent barriers and constraints to food donation. Therefore, the amendments made to the annexes of these Regulations in 2021 are of considerable interest and significance, especially due to the altered provisions for food redistribution they imply.

→ Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 → Commission Regulation (EC) 2021/382

The European Commission revised the <u>Regulation (EC) No</u> <u>852/2004</u> on food hygiene aiming to improve food safety in the EU. The revision aimed to align EU standards with new international standards (<u>WHO Codex system</u>), to ensure that appropriate food safety measures are taken when food is donated for charitable causes and reduce food waste, as part of the <u>European Green Deal</u>.



On 3 March 2021 the <u>Commission Regulation (EC) 2021/382</u> 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 (favourable opinion during the meeting of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food, and Feed (PAFF) on 12 October 2020).

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 defines which aspects shall be taken into account when assessing food safety.

> Read FEBA's article for more info

→ Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 → Commission Delegated Regulation (EC) 2021/1374

The <u>Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/1374</u> amending Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific hygiene requirements for food of animal origin, has been **published on 20 August 2021** (date of effect: 9 September 2021). The Regulation is available in all EU languages.

In order to facilitate the safe redistribution of meat by Food Banks and other charities, the abovementioned Regulation **allows freezing of meat at retail under certain conditions**:

- in the case of meat for which a 'use by' date is applied in accordance with Article 24 of <u>Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011</u> of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers, before the expiry of that date;
- without undue delay to a temperature of -18 C or lower;
- ensuring that the date of freezing is documented and provided either on the label or by other means;
- excluding meat that has been frozen before (defrosted meat); and,
- in accordance with any condition laid down by the competent authorities for freezing and further use as food.

Read FEBA's article for more info



B. EU Food Waste Reduction Targets

Annually, an estimated volume of **88 million tonnes of food**, equalling up to 20% of production, is wasted in the European Union², even whilst **33 million people** are not able to afford meals of good quality every other day.³

The <u>Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC</u> obliges Member States to establish **food waste prevention programmes and assess their effectiveness and implementation** based on the use of a common methodology.⁴

² FUSIONS, Estimates of European food waste levels, 2016.

³ EUROSTAT, Inability to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day by level of activity limitation, sex, and age, 2018.

⁴ Methodology set out in Annex III of the Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597.

Complementing this, the <u>Commission Delegated Decision</u> (<u>EU) 2019/1597</u> stipulates that Member States shall **measure the volume of food waste** occurring on each level of the food supply chain at least once every four years using a defined methodology. As a flagship initiative stipulated in the <u>EU Farm</u> **to Fork Strategy**, an <u>Inception Impact Assessment</u> preceding a directive proposal, revising the Waste Framework Directive, has been carried out on the definition of legally binding food waste reduction targets at EU level. The European Commission outlined different policy options for the scope, measurement, expression, and establishment of the targets.

An open public consultation is expected to kick-off during the first quarter of 2022, with the view of tabling a report and **legislative proposal to the EU Parliament and EU Council by 31 December 2023**.



On 29 October 2021, FEBA submitted a feedback paper underlining the importance of such a political instrument to drive Member States' efforts and approaches to reduce food waste, covering the entire food supply chain.

Read the feedback paper



of crisis

EU Contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security

In the framework of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, the European 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 because of the COVID-19 outbreak or other crises.

FEBA has been part of that Expert Group as an observer, participated in 7 meetings, and was invited to make an intervention at the group's first meeting on 20 January 2021.

November 2021

On 12 November 2021, the European Commission adopted the <u>contingency plan</u> and announced plans to establish the <u>European food security</u> 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.



submitted a feedback to an open consultation of the European Commission on the roadmap on the contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security in the EU.

On 13 January 2020, FEBA

Read FEBA's contribution

D. Date marking

In order to prevent misinterpretation by consumers of the "use by" and "best before" dates printed on food packages and thereby reduce household food waste, by the end of 2022, the European Commission will propose a revision of the EU rules on date marking. Thereby, the consumers' needs for comprehensible information are envisioned to be fulfilled while ensuring food safety.

As a fundament for the proposal, which is called for by the <u>EU Farm to</u> <u>Fork Strategy</u>, the Commission is conducting consumer behaviour research and an impact assessment including public and targeted consultations on possible new options to express date marking. More information on the Commissions actions in relation to date marking can be found <u>here</u>.



Being a relevant stakeholder, FEBA has been involved by the European Commission to participate in the consumer behaviour study carried out by an external Research Consortium, and was interviewed on 18 June 2021. Moreover, FEBA took part in the virtual consultation on date marking policy options organised by DG SANTE on 30 November 2021 and submitted a feedback based on input received from its members.

As a general assessment, FEBA Members have a clear understanding of the different date marking options. However, they highlight the confusion especially at consumer level. Due to this lack of information, huge quantities of good food are daily thrown away. When addressing this topic it is important to consider the national particular circumstances and raise awareness through communication but also education of younger generations.

2. A stronger social Europe

 The role of FEBA in the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) Community

The **FEAD Community** is an open membership network for people providing assistance to the most deprived in Europe, including national **FEAD Managing Authorities, organisations delivering or interested in FEAD-funded activities, EU level NGOs, and EU institutions**. It brings together all those who are working to reduce the worst forms of poverty in EU Member States and is a space for members to share good practices, encourage new ideas, and to discuss how to provide nonfinancial assistance to the most deprived in Europe.

FEBA has been a member of the Advisory Board of the FEAD Community, actively contributing to the transition period from FEAD to REACT-EU and ESF+.



ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE FEAD COMMUNITY WHERE FEBA AND SOME OF ITS MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN 2021

Thematic Seminar meetings

- **Thematic Seminar (2-3 February 2021)**, hosted by France, on new beneficiaries (end-recipients) of FEAD-funded measures and new practices implemented during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Thematic Seminar (29-30 April 2021)**, hosted by Spain, on integrated approaches to support beneficiaries towards their social inclusion, and creating synergies between FEAD and other funds.
- Thematic Seminar (6-7 September 2021), hosted by Estonia, on monitoring and outreach of FEAD-funded measures for the most deprived people.

Peer Exchange meetings

Peer Exchange (31 March 2021) on social inclusion during and after the pandemic.

- **Peer Exchange (26 May 2021)** on the implementation of vouchers/e-voucher schemes.
- Peer Exchange (5 October 2021) on designing and implementing accompanying measures and social inclusion programmes by actively involving stakeholders and end recipients (experts by experience).



Read FEBA' article to know more

On the occasion of the 2021 FEAD Community Annual Conference, FEBA released a new report: FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation – 2020 Implementation Report.



Read FEBA's FEAD interactive Report





Policy and legislative developments and initiatives

COVID-19: FEAD & REACT-EU to continue supporting people in need

On 20 January 2021, the **European Parliament voted on a report amending the current FEAD Regulation**.

Most relevant issues

- The main amendment regards the funding of FEAD: in the framework of the REACT-EU initiative, the total available budget remains €47.5 billion, but this amendment opens the possibility for Member States to allocate part of their REACT-EU resources (see box) for 2021 and 2022 to FEAD programmes. The funds can be spent until the end of 2023, therefore bridging the gap between the emergency crisis response and the long-term recovery supported by the new programmes under the MFF 2021-2027 (e.g. ESF+).
- It is now possible to use an EU co-financing rate of up to 100%, in order to ensure that Member States have sufficient financial means to swiftly implement measures to assist the most deprived.
- Furthermore, in alignment with the REACT-EU initiative, 11% of the additional resources for 2021 will be prefinanced.

HextGenerationEU

RECOVERY ASSISTANCE FOR COHESION AND THE TERRITORIES OF EUROPE (REACT-EU)

In order to relieve the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Member States' economic and welfare system and foster a quick and balanced recovery, the EU Commission launched the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) under the umbrella of <u>Next Generation</u> EU on 23 December 2020. €50.6 billion in total (current prices), it provides fresh resources to existing cohesion policy programmes for the years 2021 and 2022.

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The funding is divided **into two tranches: €39.8 billion in 2021 and €10.8 billion in 2022**. The allocation is adjusted for Member States' respective relative wealth, the drop in GDP levels, and the rise of unemployment rates. The resources are distributed from the European Social Fund (ESF), FEAD, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). So far, the main areas benefitting from REACT-EU under the **ESF** are labour market interventions, social inclusion, and education and training.⁵

In 2021, over €400 million were requested as additional **FEAD** resources with a large share of that sum allocated to Italy (€199.38 million) and France (ca. €104.03 million) where it was used to provide additional food aid to people in need.⁶

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

Concluding a journey started in 2018, the <u>Regulation (EU) 2021/1057</u> of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 was published on the Official Journal of the European Union of the ESF+ Regulation on 30 June 2021, following the vote of the European Parliament on 8 June and the approval of the Council of the EU.



With a budget of 88 billion euros for the period 2021-2027, its goal is to address the worst aspects of the pandemic in term of poverty and social exclusion and to implement the action plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The new ESF+ merges:

- 1. European Social Fund (ESF)
- 2. Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)
- 3. Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)
- 4. EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)

Read more in FEBA Monitoring Report (June 2021 edition)

⁵ European Structural and Investment Funds, REACT-EU: Fostering crisis repair and resilience, 2021.

⁶ European Structural and Investment Funds, In profile: Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, 2021.



In the ESF+ there is the possibility to use the **funds to cover the costs of recovery, transport, storage and redistribution of food donations** (i.e. surplus food) and direct awareness raising activities pursuant to <u>Art. 22</u> (d) of the ESF+ Regulation. Therefore, the ESF+ could be used to cover the recurrent costs of the daily activity of FEBA Members.

FEBA and several members (France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania) were involved with interviews in the first phase of this study in summer 2021 and a European Commission report on the simplified cost options was published in November 2021.

> Read the Report



C. European Child Guarantee

According to Eurostat, **24.2%** of children living in EU Member States have been at **risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2020**.⁷ The associated lack of adequate health, education, housing, and nutrition can provoke an **intergenerational cycle** of deprivation with substantial effects impacting the children's wellbeing in the long term.

The **European Child Guarantee** strives to break this vicious cycle. It was **adopted in June this year** with the goal to support the cost-free **provision of key services** and their positive concomitants to children in need:

- A minimum of one healthy meal at school to contribute to a nutritious diet;
- Healthcare provision to ensure access to medical examinations;

- Early childhood education and care to prevent social segregation; and
- Education and school-based activities including the necessary equipment for long-distance learning.

Member States should identify eligible children that, for instance, have a minority or migrant background, are impacted by disabilities, or grow up in precarious situations, such as homelessness and family difficulties.

To be effective, the Child Guarantee must be embedded into a **policy framework** aligned to the <u>European</u> <u>Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan</u> and the <u>EU strategy on the Rights of the</u> <u>Child</u>, and individual measures must be designed on a national level.

The ESF+ provides EU funding to support financing the actions taken. All Member States in which the levels of child poverty and social exclusion are **higher than EU average** are requested to allocate **at least 5% of their ESF+ resources** to the Child Guarantee implementation.

, Eurostat, 1 in 4 children in the EU at risk of poverty and social exclusion, 2021.



The work of the FEBA EU Working Group in 2021

FEBA represents its members at European and international level on cross-cutting issues. The work carried out by FEBA together with its members in 2021 contributed to advocate on different policy developments.





2021 FEBA contributions to high-level political events



10/02 / FAO NY – World Pulses Day

- 23-24/03 / European Commission <u>Second</u> conference of the EaSI Programme "Supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and synergies with other EU programmes and initiatives"
- 17/06 / Council of Europe Public Hearing on <u>"Eliminating extreme child poverty in Europe:</u> an international obligation and a moral duty"
- 23/09 / POLITICO <u>Conference "Future of Food</u> <u>& Farming Summit 2021"</u>
- 05/10 / Ministry of Agriculture of Croatia <u>"Food</u> is not waste, together to the goal"
- 11/10 / UNHR Social Forum 2021 "Good practices, success stories, lessons learned and challenges in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, with a special focus on international cooperation and solidarity, and from a human rights perspective"
- 29/11 / EESC and Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU – <u>"Improving the sustainability</u> of the European food supply chain"

2021 FEBA policy briefings and reports

- **01/02** / LIFE 2020 Call for Proposal from NGOs on the European Green Deal (NGO4GD)
- **19/10** / FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation: 2020 Implementation Report
- **04/11** / Policy briefing on REACT-EU allocation
- **29/11** / Policy briefing on REACT-EU allocation update

2021 FEBA EU Monitoring Reports

Access FEBA's publications

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persons at risk of

poverty

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collection

system

What's next?

Concluding 2021, 12 months filled with challenges but also opportunities turned into moments of success, FEBA is looking forward to 2022. While we are anticipating the organisation and hosting of interesting meetings of the EU Working Group including fruitful discussions and tangible outcomes, the new year will be coined by promising developments and important initiatives on both the international and EU level.

ESF+ and other EU

funding

Banks in Europe representation

support FEBA's

need

development and

assist members in

$(\blacksquare) (\Rightarrow)$

2. Looking forward to 2022

- The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2022 the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022). FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the year in collaboration with other relevant organisations and bodies of the United Nations system.
- The European Commission announced **2022 as the** <u>European Year of Youth</u> to foster the engagement and participation of young people in building a better, greener, more inclusive, and digital future.
- France will take over the Presidency of the Council of the EU from **1 January to 30 June 2022** and subsequently Czech Republic from 1 July to 31 December 2022.
- **Mid-mandate of the European Parliament** in January 2022: all elected offices (President, Vice-Presidents, Quaestors, Committees and Delegations, Chairs, and Vice-Chairs) are renewed every 2.5 years.



- Second year of **REACT-EU**.
- New mandate (2022-2026) of the <u>EU Platform FLW</u>.
- EU Member States will have to report their **food waste measurement** data by 30 June 2022.



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 deep thank you to all the participants of the FEBA EU Working Group 2021 for their engagement both at European and national level in this challenging period. 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

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in)

European Food Banks Federation

eurofoodbanks

eurofoodbanks

@EuroFoodBanks

) eurofoodbank.org

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