



Brussels, 27 October 2022

## Main drivers of food security

### FEBA's response to the public consultation paper circulated among the Advisory Group for Sustainable Food Systems

We live in a complex environment characterised by inextricable links and dependencies and thus, the connection between food sustainability, food safety, and food security is crucial. However, especially the latter is increasingly fragile given the three interrelated crises of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Together, they create the perfect storm of crippling supply chains, skyrocketing inflation rates, and spiralling costs of living. These developments considerably impact global food security defined by the UN as the physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets the food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

Bearing this in mind, FEBA believes that in addition to availability and accessibility, the aspect of **affordability** should not be forgotten. Especially given the rising food prices, vulnerable groups find it increasingly more difficult to purchase food at all and do not have the means to even consider choosing healthy and sustainable products. A [recent report](#) published by FEBA assessing the activity of FEBA Members between July 2021 and June 2022 finds out that **two out of three FEBA Members (66%) have experienced an increase in the amount of food requested by charities**. More than 80% of FEBA Members identified the **largest group of final beneficiaries as families with children and single parents**, followed by **elderly people, and refugees from Ukraine**.

Given that, **food donation** is not only an environmentally-sensitive, business-friendly, and socially responsible alternative but also a **relevant driver of food security**. Besides that, it is a key pillar in the endeavour to improve the resilience of the food supply chain and foster the sustainability of the food system at large. Thanks to a network of over 340 Food Banks, recovering and redistributing large quantities of surplus food stemming from a variety of sources to a large network of charitable organisations in 30 European countries, FEBA Members are of particular importance when it comes to the cushioning of crisis-induced supply chain disruptions and market failures as experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine and its repercussions. In 2021, FEBA Members redistributed **907,280 tonnes of food (+18% compared to 2019 as pre-COVID benchmark)** to support **45,810 charitable organisations helping 11.8 million people in need (+24% increase compared to 2019 as pre-COVID benchmark)**.

However, the current developments also affect the ability of those organisations contributing to the safeguarding of food security. The recent publication by FEBA also reports that the Russian military invasion of Ukraine and the resulting geopolitical and socio-economic consequences as well as the steady rise of inflation have **repercussions on the conduct of daily activities**. Given that, facilitating food donation and providing support to Food Banks as societal actors cushioning the negative impacts on the well-being of vulnerable groups is a relevant instrument that should be granted **more attention at EU and national level**, especially due to the beneficial interlinkage of food recovery and redistribution with the objectives of the European Green Deal.

#### About the European Food Banks Federation

The European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) is a European non-profit organisation and works in collaboration with 24 Full Members and 6 Associate Members in 30 European countries. Since 1986, FEBA's mission has consisted in representing its membership at European and international level; supporting and strengthening Food Banks in Europe by providing training, sharing best practices and knowledge, establishing partnerships; and fostering the creation and development of new Food Banks. FEBA brings together a network of Food Banks which are committed to prevent food waste and to reduce food insecurity.

In 2021, the 341 Food Banks belonging to our membership redistributed 907,280 tonnes of food to 45,810 charitable organisations providing food assistance to 11.8 million most deprived people thanks to the professionalism of 39,781 co-workers (83% volunteers). In addition to surplus food from the food supply chain, FEBA Members also redistribute food from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and the EU Fruits and Vegetables withdrawal scheme, as well as from individual and corporate food collections.