

Strengthening food
systems by supporting
the resilience and
capacity of Food Banks

2022 REPORT





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Introduction

The FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion is the annual opportunity to promote dialogue on important topics related to food aid and social inclusion. Over the years, the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) has addressed a variety of subjects from different perspectives and angles.

The 2022 FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion has been organised by FEBA in partnership with Federația Băncilor pentru Alimente din România (FEBA Member in Romania) and took place on 14 November 2022 at the Palatul Parlamentului, Bucharest, Romania

While the 2021 edition focused on the recovery and redistribution of fruits and vegetables to the most deprived, the 2022 edition has been entitled **“Strengthening food systems by supporting the resilience and capacity of Food Banks”**.

The 2022 FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion aimed to convene FEBA Members and other stakeholders and experts to **take stock of the most important policies at the EU level on social inclusion and food aid measures** such as the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, REACT-EU, CARE, and the European Social Fund Plus. It also allowed sharing of recent legislative developments to prevent food waste in Moldova and Romania.

Skyrocketing inflation and soaring energy, fuel, fertilizers, and food prices have provoked rising costs of living, especially for the most vulnerable groups. In a context of uncertainty, when food availability but also food affordability are at stake, we should ensure that no crumb is wasted while **protecting the most vulnerable citizens from food insecurity** and ensuring that everyone can afford sufficient amounts of healthy and nutritious food, especially vulnerable groups, such as families with children, single parents, elderly, and low-income households.



Jacques
Vandenschrik,
President, FEBA

Europe must again face a new significant crisis: after the pandemic, now skyrocketing inflation, dramatic reduction of the buying power, explosive increases in energy cost. This is putting huge pressure on disadvantaged people and, by repercussion, on the food banking network and associated charities.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all stakeholders to reinforce solidarity and support. Solidarity with the poor and support to the Food Banks. Moderation of energy costs for the Food Banks will permit them to continue their activities and avoid the double penalty for the beneficiaries. We can exchange best practices for oblivion, but this will not pay the energy cost and the energy bills. I also would like to appeal to the food producers to show their concern to those who face hunger, for humanity's sake do not let people suffer hunger in Europe.



Keynote speech



Jeroen Jutte, Head of Unit, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

We are in a moment of crisis, we know this from our everyday reality, especially in the Food Banks. We are still in post-pandemic times. Happily, the pandemic is becoming less and less relevant. We face a very fragile economic recovery. If it is in recovery at all, **there is a risk of recession strongly affected and impacted by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine**. With the energy crisis caused by the war, energy prices rise. But not only energy, but also, the food markets are in crisis with broken supply chains, and huge losses of food production in Ukraine, a fundamentally important country in this respect, leading to price increases for both

basic as well as processed food products. This year, again more than before, climate change is impacting food production and therewith also pushing up food prices.

The weakest in society suffer the most severe consequences. There is a big role for public support: national and also European support. To activate existing schemes and to use them as well as we can, but also to see if we need to have further new schemes to supplement.



In this context, we appreciate the great work that the Food Banks are doing, often in very difficult circumstances, with increasing demands in all Member States. We will continue to be your partner in this. The use of the ESF+, FEAD as we used to call it, can bring help where it is much needed and for those that need it so much. In the last few years, FEAD and ESF+ have proven to be adaptable and also responsive to emerging needs.

From a regulatory point of view, we have amended the regulation four times in the last two years to give more funding and flexibility. As part of the Corona Response Investment Initiative (CRII), amendments made it possible to use vouchers and buy personal protective equipment for organisations delivering support. Moreover, liquidity in the Member States has been strengthened, making it possible to provide 100% co-financing for one accounting year. As part of the REACT-EU, another initiative in this context, we added amendments to allocate yet again additional funding, providing top-ups on existing supports, such as food and/or basic material assistance to foster social inclusion actions.

The knowledge of the Food Banks, with the work on the ground, but also through the good cooperation with Managing Authorities, have helped us to make these proposals better. They were essential to address important challenges and exploit new flexibilities.

As part of the Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE), following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, new amendments came, allowing Member States and regions to have again more flexibility and more liquidity to use FEAD for emergency support for people fleeing the war of aggression. We also introduced unit costs, fixing the amount for a week to up to EUR 100 per week for 26 weeks, for refugees to support their basic material needs, as a key stepping stone for their pathway to possible integration into society and to finding employment.

Where do we stand today? We hope to have adopted all programmes for the 2021-2027 period by the end of this year, only a few weeks from now. For this reason, it is a very, very important moment, where we can almost take stock. As you know, the regulatory framework says that at least 3% of ESF+ resources in these programmes should be devoted to addressing material deprivation. **Member States have already programmed ESF+ resources to support the most deprived persons, amounting to EUR 4.5 billion, which is close to 5% of the available resources.**



In this time of very worsening climate change, the European Union is also fully committed to reducing food waste which, in times of risks in the food production chain, is very important as well. Again, the Food Banks have a crucial role to play in setting up new systems, developing existing systems that help persons most in need, but also making sure that we waste as limited food quantities, as little as possible.

In this context, a new legislative framework is also helping because we have made it more transparent and easier to use ESF+ resources for food donations. We hope that in the years to come, not only will there be more resources for Food Banks but also that they will contribute, for example, through donated surplus food to less waste in this sector.

To conclude, **at this moment when the weakest in society are most impacted by inflation, restrictive fiscal policy, slowing down of the economy, by people worried about their jobs and their families' finances, the work of Food Banks is more important than ever.** The necessity of your work is very evident, it is one of standing up for what is right, what is just, for humanity. The EU will always support you in this way. What you do today is therefore very important: speak with each other to learn from each other, because despite our support, which is considerable, resources are always limited, and they are not without end.

We must do as well as we can with that what we have. Please share also with us your conclusions, and what can be improved also from our side. How can we support you better? How can we learn? Only in this way, we can make the support we provide to you better, and you can provide it to those most in need as effectively as possible.



FEAD, REACT-EU, and the European Food Banks Federation: 2021 Implementation Report

Presentation of key findings

Since 2019, FEBA has continuously monitored the implementation of the FEAD across EU Member States to paint a coherent picture as regards challenges and opportunities the Fund entails for the Food Banks in their role as Partner Organisations.

On the occasion of the **FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion 2022**, FEBA releases its new publication “**FEAD, REACT-EU, and the European Food Banks Federation: 2021 Implementation Report**” to communicate concise insights on the implementation of these Funds on the ground, taking into account amendments and their expediency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To analyse both the support received through FEAD and the REACT-EU initiative, and disclose particularities regarding implementation and impact, the new report is based on **two sets of qualitative and quantitative data** stemming from responses from **10 FEBA Members**, who received either FEAD or REACT-EU or both, to two online surveys.

The questionnaires were tailored to further shed light on **challenges and opportunities related to administration and collaboration with the national Managing Authority**.



FEBA Members received food financed through FEAD and/or REACT-EU resources in 2021: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Spain.



- Among the countries mentioned, the FEBA Member in Estonia is the only one who was involved solely in REACT-EU.
- FEBA Members in Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Spain redistributed only FEAD food and/or material assistance.
- FEBA Members in Belgium, Czech Republic, and France were engaged in both programmes.

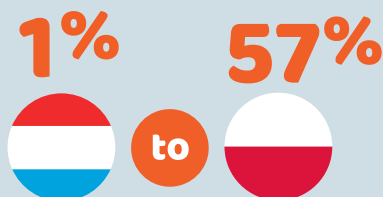
70%

of FEBA Members responding to the surveys consider FEAD and REACT-EU assistance (food and non-food) as important parts of their composition of products for redistribution.

Key numbers

168,532

tonnes of FEAD and/or REACT-EU food products have been redistributed by FEBA Members in Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Spain. This amount is equal to 19% of the total amount of food redistributed by the entire FEBA network in 2021.



FEBA Members received quantities of FEAD and/or REACT-EU food ranging from 1% (Luxembourg) to 57% (Poland) of the amount of food redistributed at national level.

+15,000

local charitable organisations benefited from food and/or material assistance financed through FEAD and/or REACT-EU and redistributed by FEBA Members.



+3.5m

end-beneficiaries received FEAD and/or REACT-EU assistance through FEBA Members in Belgium, Estonia, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Spain.

FEAD & REACT-EU in 2021

- **All FEBA Members** benefited from **foodstuff**, **4 members (44.4%)** from **non-food items** (such as hygiene products), and **1 organisation (11.1%)** received **assistance to improve their technical capacities** as well as support Partner Organisations.
- **6 FEBA Members (66.7%)** of the responding FEBA Members undertook **accompanying measures**, among them workshops on food waste prevention and social inclusion, building skills related to dietary needs, healthy eating, or budgeting. Moreover, some organised specific food redistribution measures for particularly vulnerable groups, such as elderly people, and provided information on available social services.
- **All 9 FEBA Members (66.7%)** involved in the FEAD received economic reimbursement of some kind for conducted activities.
- **All 4 FEBA Members** involved in REACT-EU received food products, and **2 members (50%)** were also provided with non-food items for redistribution.

→ Considering the **quality, quantity, variety, and nutritional value** of the FEAD and/or REACT-EU food received in 2021, the respondents painted a positive picture.

→ In addition to food assistance, 4 FEBA Members were provided with **non-food products** of different kinds, with **personal hygiene items** being the most frequent type (44%), followed by **sanitary equipment** like disposable face masks (22%). **Baby nappies, home cleaning goods, and female hygiene products** have also been received by 11% of the responding organisations, respectively.

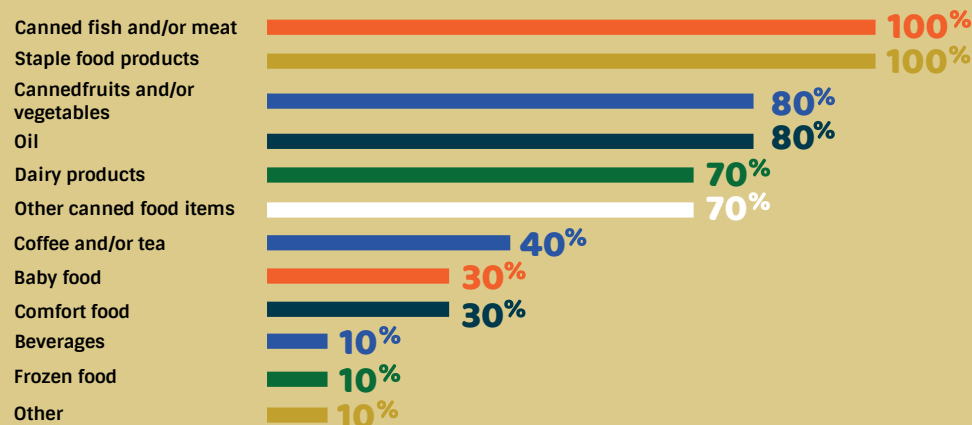
→ Amongst the most acute issues, FEBA Members identified **storage and logistic problems (40%)** as well as the **insufficiency of economic resources** for administrative, transport, and storage activities (30%). Both the **lack of collaboration with Managing Authorities** and the **unsatisfying quality of food products** received have been experienced by one-fifth (20%) of those Food Banks responding to the survey. Single respondents further name delays in the start of the 2021 programme, difficulties concerning the delivery of individual products, as well as cancellation of tenders as problematic factors negatively impacting the implementation

of the FEAD and/or REACT-EU. Presumably, these aspects were closely interlinked with **supply chain interruptions and procurement problems** caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

→ **Several positive aspects could be disclosed:** a positive impact on the diet of the most deprived due to the **quantity and variety of FEAD food redistributed** (89% of respondents); the availability of FEAD facilitated **addressing the needs of local charities** regarding food and non-food products (67%); facilitated cooperation with local charitable organisations (67%); the important contribution of the FEAD as regards the **inclusion of charitable organisations and final beneficiaries** in the local community (67%); a smoother

collaboration with regional entities (e.g. social service, public administration) (67%); the FEAD fostered the involvement of charities and end recipients in **social inclusion measures** (e.g. training programmes, job searching) (56%); and the availability of FEAD allowed local charitable organisations to shift their economic and non-economic resources towards other social inclusion activities (e.g. health, education, or vocational training) (40%).

Food typologies



Good practices from FEBA Members

The use of FEAD/REACT-EU in France



Anne-Claire Alain, Public Affairs Officer,
Fédération Française des Banques
Alimentaires

In France, the Fédération Française des Banques Alimentaires welcomed positively the announcement about the ESF+ support for addressing material deprivation in 2021-2027. This is the only EU programme that **provides direct aid to people in precarious material situations** in Europe, which is now secured for the next 7 years. As regards the implementation of the ESF+, we are very **satisfied that a part of the resources (7%) is devoted to addressing material deprivation**, which is inseparable from food.

The **impact** of unsuccessful tenders is representing the main challenge for our use of EU funds:

- Since 2016, almost EUR 54,228,297 of European funding have been allocated for the 4 networks receiving FEAD products for redistribution.
- In 2021, EUR 37 million in unsuccessful tenders impacted the activities of these networks.

The phenomenon is **amplified in 2022 with the inflation crisis**: more than **50% of the FEAD tenders for 2022** were unsuccessful. Some of them may be relaunched, but we already deplore a reduction of food quantities worth EUR 15 million.

Different approaches have been considered to address this challenge:

Multi-annual contracts

- **Positive intention** as this should **lead to more actors in the agri-food sector responding to the tender** and thereby give **more stability**.
- However, the **complexity to foresee and express the Food Banks' needs** over a multi-annual period must be taken into account.
- **Food market prices are currently very high**, which can lead to unfavourable conditions.



The requests of French Food Banks

- To add new products and to increase diversity;
- To continue using our logistics and delivery points; and
- To compensate the unsuccessful tenders issued by FranceAgriMer with new tenders or national financial support for direct purchase by the Fédération Française des Banques Alimentaires.

New logistic platform

- FranceAgriMer criticized the French Food Banks for their complex logistics involving 260 delivery points all over the country.
- **A single logistic platform was created to facilitate the delivery of products** to all 4 associations authorised to receive FEAD products.

The use of FEAD/REACT-EU in Belgium



Jozef Mottar, Managing Director, Fédération Belge des Banques Alimentaires / Belgische Federatie van Voedselbanken



Last year, 31% of the total food volume that was redistributed by the Fédération Belge des Banques Alimentaires / Belgische Federatie van Voedselbanken (FEBA Member in Belgium) was coming from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). Hence, it constitutes an important pillar of the total of the activity of the Belgian Food Banks.

About the budget

- EUR 12.5 million per year for the FEAD programming period 2014-2020
- EUR 18.0 million per year through REACT-EU in 2021-2022
- EUR 11.8 million per year through ESF+ for 2013-2027

Challenges

- Delays in deliveries since 2021 due to significant price revisions;
- Higher prices lead to the inability to increase the product quantities equal to the increase in budget (with 50% more resources, only 20-25% more food can be purchased); and
- ESF+ budget is not adjusted to the inflation rates and the food demand

The implementation stages of FEAD in Belgium

- ➔ **Purchase:** The Federal Service for Social Integration (Belgian Managing Authority) requests the offers and publishing of tenders in consultation with the main stakeholders, among them Food Banks. Mainly shelf-stable basic food, such as pasta, UHT milk, or rice is purchased, on average 22-24 product types annually.
- ➔ **Delivery:** Since 2017/2018, the products are delivered to the Federation's central warehouse.
- ➔ **Redistribution:** The food items are sent by truck to the 9 regional and local Food Banks in Belgium where 7 recognised food aid organisations are picking them up. In 2021, 754 organisations have received FEAD support of which 50% are not affiliated with the Food Banks but mainly municipal public centres for social welfare. In addition, the Food Banks deliver the FEAD products to eligible entities from where they are redistributed to the end beneficiaries. 380,000 people in need have been supported through the FEAD in 2021. This delivery and redistribution system led to a significant decrease in transport costs, which translated into more available resources for the purchase of FEAD food.

of a raising number of end beneficiaries (20% increase in 2022 compared to 2021)

Taking into account these aspects, the Fédération Belge des Banques Alimentaires / Belgische Federatie van Voedselbanken is asking for more financial resources for the years to come to be able to respond to the increasing need for assistance.

Food vouchers under ESF+

Under the ESF+, the provision of food vouchers in Belgium is possible. According to calculations made, however, they are not as efficient as the centralised purchase of food due to higher administrative costs. This translates into less available resources available for the acquisition of food for the benefit of people in need.



The FEAD programme in Czech Republic



Veronica Láchová, CEO, Česká
Federace Potravinových Bank



POTRAVINOVÉ
BANKY

Food Banks belonging to the network of **Česká Federace Potravinových Bank** (FEBA Member in Czech Republic) **distribute around 80% of FEAD food and non-food items**. The remaining 20% of FEAD is distributed by big nationally operating NGOs like Caritas, Naděje, and Diakonia, engaged in social services, but also Partner Organisations of the FEAD programme.

Funds of the FEAD programme are divided into branches: the so-called **“PoMPo” meaning food and material support, which comprises not only food but also hygiene and household products, school supplies, and textile items for people in need**, for example sleeping bags or tents. The second branch of the FEAD includes **free lunches for school kids**, but it is mainly managed by the local authorities.

The Managing Authority of the FEAD programme in Czech Republic is the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is responsible for the purchase of food and public tenders, for the national administration but also for data collection.

In addition, they are responsible for cooperation with European Institutions and financial management. Regarding the lunches for school kids, in 2021, around 950-960 schools in the whole country were involved, providing support to almost 50,000 children from socially disadvantaged families. Food Banks are not involved in this assistance scheme.

The food and material support programme in Czech Republic must be related to accompanying measures, meaning it is only accessible for registered social services and their final beneficiaries. Food Banks are involved like a partner to the Ministry of Social Affairs and charitable organisations are sub-partners. Similarly, to the Belgian model, in Czech Republic, Food Banks provide warehouse distribution, services for NGOs if needed and they can also pick up food in warehouses if, for example, they are small and they don't have enough storage place.

The purchase of all items is strictly managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs,

as well as all the tenders, but the sub-partners can communicate the items which they would like to have in their deliveries. This means that if a Food Bank has close cooperation with charitable organisations, it can allow them to find out which kind of food and hygiene products are most suitable for specific groups of end beneficiaries, such as families with children.



In 2018, FEAD food constituted a share of 15% of the total food provided by the Food Banks, while in 2021, it was only 4%. However, what is important is the quality of the food, which is received through the FEAD programme, because it is long shelf life food, and especially pasta and rice are valuable products. There are no other possibilities for Food Banks to get these items, except from food collections and the FEAD programme.

Currently, the FEAD programme has around 61,000 final beneficiaries, except the school lunches, and over 300 sub-partners, i.e. charitable organisations, that means that each of the 15 Food Banks in the Czech Republic is operating with several sub-partners which are connected with the programme only through the Food Banks.

Existing problems are related to the stagnation in financial allocation until 2022 and the increasing demand.

Regarding monetary support, in 2021, 5% of the FEAD budget in the Czech Republic was allocated to cover distribution costs, and thus, available for example to support Food Banks and 5% was connected with the sub-partners and with social services. In both cases, it was raised to 7% in 2022.

In 2022, our communication with the Ministry of Social Affairs related to the FEAD has been great and they are flexible as regards the product portfolio. **We are amongst the countries with the highest number of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine per capita and we were not able to use the FEAD programme for them because the social services and the sub-partners whom we are operating with had not been allocated enough money to support the refugees because the outbreak of the war was an unexpected event.** We friendly negotiated with the Ministry of Social Affairs, trying to change the “rules of the game”, also about REACT-EU, and are now able to store the FEAD food also in the main logistics centre of the Czech



Federation of Food Banks. **Now we have a contract with the Ministry of Social Affairs specifying that we can provide this food in any situation of crisis or lack of food in any region.** This agreement is of high value to ensure support to people in need in the event of, for example, a natural disaster.

Supplies are controlled and redistributed by the Food Banks and the decision if supplies should, or should not, be used is mainly on the Czech Federation of Food Banks and by the regional local authorities. Thanks to this programme, we can provide help very fast anywhere across the country.

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I conclude by underlining the present challenges: as well as our friends in other countries, we are fighting with delays for tenders, the increase in prices, and of course rising demands from people in need. We hope that we will be able in the next six months to help people anywhere throughout the country by redistributing this food. And we hope that the situation, as well as our ability to deal with it, will improve in future.



Food redistribution in Estonia



Piet Boerefijn, Founder,
TOIDUPANK



In addition to the recovered surplus food, we also redistribute FEAD food, but this activity works differently than in most other countries. FEAD food redistribution cannot be integrated into our everyday work but is based on a separate system. **We must prepare around 100,000 packages of FEAD food per year and receive a list of people to whom we redistribute them. In 2022, the number of packages has risen by 72% compared to 2021.** This data shows that we grow very fast, but our biggest problem is that our warehouses are too small and this, together with the lack of trucks and cold and defreezing rooms is a crucial hurdle.

In Estonia, food waste amounts to 166,515 tonnes per year. Around 50% of this quantity is food perfectly edible and safe. In other words, every day 30,000kg of food, equalling 26 garbage trucks goes to waste. We aim to try to rescue as much as possible of surplus food.

The activities of TOIDUPANK (FEBA Member in Estonia) in a nutshell

- 16 Food Banks operated with the support of 300 volunteers weekly
- 2 types of food redistribution: directly to people in need in cooperation with 70 local municipalities and indirectly to 223 charities every week
- 20,000 end beneficiaries weekly, a 100% increase compared to pre-pandemic numbers, of which 1/3 are Ukrainian refugees (currently 62,000 Ukrainian refugees, 4.8% of the population, in Estonia)
- 4.4 million kg of food redistributed in 2022 (46% more than in 2021)

In the Estonian retail sector, between 2015 and 2021, there has been an increase of 67% in food waste, constituting a lot of work that can yet be done. According to the goal of the United Nations and the EU, we have to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030.

We are in close cooperation with the Estonian Food Authority, and they published a manual on food donations which clarifies key aspects for donors of food and the recipients, for example how long food can be redistributed after the 'best before date' and how food products must be defrosted. This manual has been released 3

years ago, but as Food Bank we already had a silent agreement with the Food Authority since 2010. Among others, we deepened the topic of frozen food: it is possible to freeze food expiring today, re-label it, and thereby extend the shelf life for up to 2 months. This solution offers a lot of possibilities to rescue a wide range of goods and high-quality food that especially people living in poverty struggle to afford. In addition, there is room for improvement in recovering food from restaurants, hotels, catering, and cruise ships.*

In fact, in Estonia there are two types of FEAD use: purchased food but also donated food. Using the latter, defined in Article 26.2.d of the EU Regulation underlying the FEAD, we can receive financial support for the everyday activities of the Food



Our biggest obstacle to more recovery and redistribution of surplus food is a lack of funds, but in the past three years, we could use FEAD for donated food.

Bank, that is recovery, transport, storage, and redistribution of surplus food. In the spring of 2014, the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs decided that, in principle, they would be willing to use 10% of the Estonian FEAD budget for covering these costs. Shortly after, however, it came out that it was not possible due to a high level of complexity and bureaucratic effort.

Following bilateral meetings between the European Commission and Estonian authorities, the European Parliament voted in favour of the Simplified Cost Option. Since October 2019, after specific tenders, the Estonian Food Bank signed contracts with the Ministry of Social Affairs to apply this option.

How does it work in practice? The target group for FEAD comprises the most deprived. **Social workers provide the Food Bank with a list of eligible persons every week to whom packages entailing at least 3kg of at least three different food categories should be redistributed.** The package must further be redistributed in all local municipalities, also in rural areas, and on the islands. We receive EUR 1.20 per kilo of financial support with a cap of EUR 3.60. However, the packages are much bigger than 3kg, with an average weight of 10kg. Considering that in 2022, we will redistribute 4.4 million kilos of FEAD food, meaning EUR 1,000,000, the reimbursed amount per kilo is EUR 0.23 instead of EUR 1.20. **The FEAD programme is accompanied by relatively little**



bureaucracy and is very effective. Therefore, I would recommend it to other European countries to recover more food and assist more people in need.

* Official Journal of the European Union, Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, 11 March 2014.

Beyond the EU: experiences from Moldova

Banca de Alimente: the first Food Bank in Moldova



Igor Belei, President, Banca de Alimente Moldova



Banca de Alimente Moldova is the most recent addition to the FEBA network but has a unique story. It started as a solidarity campaign: some years ago, following a skill-sharing visit to Italy, we organised a national food collection campaign called “Meal of joy”. Only in 2021, the impact of this national campaign was evident: in only a couple of days, with the help of hundreds of volunteers, we collected 60 to 70 tonnes of food.

In 2021, we founded the Food Bank, and in March 2022 we joined the European Food Banks Federation.

Our activity goes beyond the recovery of products. In 2022, we focused on **promoting the food waste legislation** and during this year we managed to facilitate the reunion of the Parliament groups in Moldova and Romania striving at the adoption of a new law. We also

Banca de Alimente Moldova in numbers

- 18 employees and 20 volunteers
- 5 trucks
- 500 m2 of warehouse space, including cold room facilities
- Collaborations with 50 accredited charitable organisations redistributing food to people in need
- 29 partners
- In 2021, 278 tonnes of food recovered, mainly fruits, vegetables, and bread but also a small percentage, of frozen products
- In the first half of 2022, 20 tonnes of food have been recovered. The decrease is because all our resources have been redirected to respond to the Ukraine crisis. The demand from beneficiaries has been increasing. More than 3,200 beneficiaries are selected as eligible for social welfare services, and these are the daily beneficiaries, but we also help homeless people.

envisage **drafting the first guide to avoid food waste for consumers in Moldova** and **having partnerships with schools**. The supermarket chain Kaufland helped

us with the campaign for preventing food waste by raising awareness amongst school children to improve their daily behaviour.

In the week before Easter, we organised a food collection and we are planning a second one, in the last week of November. We would like to increase our activities in schools, and we hope that next year, this educational campaign will cover the entire Republic of Moldova.

Our strategy for the future is to develop new partnerships, expand the existing partnerships, and include more charitable organisations, but unfortunately, we cannot respond to the increased demand because all our resources are focused on helping refugees. We expect increased pressure on the Food Banks, both because of the decrease in purchasing power, but also the increase in the number of refugees, which are expected to exceed 10 million who will leave Ukraine because of the war and its consequences. A big part of them will arrive in Romania and Moldova, and we will try to help them.

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Unfortunately, the demand for assistance is increasing and Moldova is facing a very dramatic energy crisis and social crisis. The inflation in September was more than 30% and this exerts strong pressure on our welfare system. The support from our partners will be crucial to address the challenges of this phase.



We showed solidarity in the form of product redistribution, together with our partners and with the support of retailers in Moldova, but also with the help of other European Food Banks and with the support of FEBA. We redistributed food in more than 80 social centres across Moldova and through our employees and our partners, **we reached a high number of refugees, more than 16,000.** We provided food products, but also other types of items and we also like to assist with clothing and first help with basic products.

When you know that you can get the support of your colleagues, especially from your colleagues from abroad, you have more hope and more willingness to work. We are happy that we have a very good relationship with the national authorities, that we have managed to influence the passing of this piece of legislation on food waste, and we are happy that we can benefit from the experience of the Food Banks in Europe.

The new food waste law in Moldova



Mariana Cușnir, Member of Parliament of Moldova

In September 2015, **the Republic of Moldova**, together with 192 other UN Member States, **committed to implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda** by adopting the Summit Declaration on Sustainable Development.

Reducing food loss and waste is an important target of Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3, as well as a means of achieving other goals such as **food security, improved nutrition, and environmental sustainability**.

In addition to the fact that preventing food loss and waste is widely seen as an important way to reduce production costs and increase the efficiency of the food system, improve food security and nutrition, and contribute to environmental sustainability, **there are practical problems faced by operators in the food sector, as well as by the waste management system in the Republic of Moldova, which generated interest in developing a draft law in this regard.**

Therefore, it is essential to implement measures leading to the reduction of food waste created, improving the rate of calory intake deficit for the vulnerable layers of society of the Republic of Moldova, in the context in which:

- **the economic operators active in the field of retail trade cannot return the unsold food products to the producer, and**
- **there are not enough ways and resources to process waste, including food waste, as well as other types of waste (plastic, packaging, etc.).**



On 3 November 2022, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted Law No 303 on the prevention of food loss and waste with the votes of the parliamentary majority. I would like to mention that since 2019, there have been attempts to promote such a draft law, but there was not enough maturity or political will to undertake its promotion.

The purpose of this law is **to ensure the transition to a circular economy by keeping food in the consumption circuit, primarily for human consumption**, and avoiding the creation of food waste, as well as reducing expenses related to food loss and waste.

The concerned law pursues the following objectives:

- Preventing food loss and waste by recovering and redistributing food that is safe for consumption;
- Providing safe food products to all consumers;

- Reducing the amount of food waste generated by all participants in the food sector;
- Avoiding unnecessary costs of keeping and neutralising waste generated by food loss;
- Ensuring fair and correct practices in relation to food products; and
- Implementation of circular economy principles.

The law stipulates who are the operators in the food sector, who can be the beneficiary organisations and who the final consumers are.

Herewith, Banca de Alimente Moldova was harmoniously introduced as a beneficiary organisation with the possibility of redistributing safe food to other beneficiary organisations as provided by the law. The measures to prevent food waste and environmental pollution are prioritised in the law.

- Priority is given to the **transfer of food through donation to beneficiary organisations or directly to final consumers for human consumption** or as feed for animals, but not before their promotional sale to final consumers according to the legislation.
- If after completing the first 2 measures, the food owned by operators is unfit for human or animal consumption, it undergoes **other stages of recovery**, such as:
 - transformation into compost, or biogas, neutralisation, or incineration / co-incineration;

- transfer of food through donation by the food operator within the last one-third of the product's validity;
- easily perishable foods, with a validity term of less than 48 hours, are donated only to the final consumer; and
- operators have the right to donate daily up to 5 units of any food product to each requesting final consumer, and in the case of culinary products, the volume of the donation is determined by each operator.

The following products constitute exceptions from donations:

- alcoholic beverages; and
- foods that have been declared/ classified as unfit for human or animal consumption.

Food business operators transferring food through donation shall keep records of the food donated to final consumers, as well as the list of beneficiary organisations receiving the food. The documentation required for the transfer of food based on the provisions of this law is regulated by the Government.

The law refers to the Fiscal Code regarding deductions and fiscal facilities in the case of the transfer of food as per this law, but, at the moment, these facilities have not been yet approved. While adopting the Fiscal Code in 2023, we will come up with separate proposals on this subject matter after having analysed several criteria.

The Law shall enter into force in 6 months after its adoption, and the Government will draft and bring its normative acts in line with this law.



Eventually, **the law is not mandatory for operators in the food sector, it is rather a stimulating and voluntary one, focusing on social solidarity**, on the awareness of each of us that by preventing food waste throughout the production chain we reduce the negative impact on the environment, since the natural resources must be consumed rationally, and the creation of food waste must be reduced.

This law is the first step in the implementation of the circular economy practice.

I understand that many adjustments and new regulations await us. It is not easy, but once we have set this goal, we will go firmly towards achieving the expected results.

Experiences from Romania

The food waste law in Romania



Florin-Alexandru Alexe,
Vice-President of the
Assembly of Deputies of
Romania



Bogdan-Gruia Ivan,
Member of the Assembly
of Deputies of Romania



Diana-Anda Buzoianu, Member
of the Assembly of Deputies of
Romania



Miklós Zoltán, Member of the
Assembly of Deputies of Romania

The United Nations estimate that 17% of the food produced every year is wasted, which in Europe amounts to about 89 million tonnes, equivalent to 178 kilograms of food waste per capita per year. At a national level, Romanian citizens on average waste 70 kg every year, but the real numbers could be much higher.



The objective of the Romanian food waste law is to fulfil the targets pursued at the international level, including halving per capita waste of food by 2030.

We will create an **online platform on food waste** managed by the Ministry of Agriculture in which information will be reported by economic operators. Moreover, the following measures will be adopted:

- Informative materials will be drafted by the Ministry of Agriculture for the fight against food waste;
- Public authorities will implement waste reduction measures when their activity is related to the management of food products;
- Food business operators will make all the necessary

efforts to conclude contracts to donate food products in advance of their expiration; and

- We will set up a national strategy against food waste.

This law aims to ensure the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals aspired to at the European and international level by Romania regarding the prevention and reduction of food waste. Reducing food waste is an objective pursued by all operators in the agri-food sector.

The purpose of this law is to establish measures to prevent and reduce food waste and foster related promotional actions in order to increase the use and valorisation of food throughout the food supply chain.



Economic operators in the agri-food sector, as defined in *Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety*, have the obligation to take measures to prevent food waste.

Economic operators shall implement measures to prevent and reduce food waste according to the following **food waste prevention hierarchy**:

- 1 Accountability measures to reduce food waste in the agri-food chain, starting with production, processing,

storage, distribution and marketing of food, including in the hotel industry sector and other food services;

- 2 Measures regarding the reduced-price sale of food products close to reaching their durability date minimum or use-by date, as the case may be, according to the legislation in force;
- 3 Measures regarding the redistribution of food, through a free transfer, for human consumption, to the receiving operators or final consumers;
- 4 Measures regarding the use of food products for animal feed;
- 5 Measures to valorise the elements and substances contained in food waste for industrial uses;
- 6 Measures for directing food products that have become unfit for human

or animal consumption to favour transformation into compost;

- 7 Measures for directing agri-food products that have become unfit for human or animal consumption to favour their utilisation by transformation into biogas;
- 8 Measures regarding the direction to an authorised unit for the neutralisation of the food products left after passing through the stages provided for in letter a)-f); and
- 9 Measures for the elimination and use of animal by-products and derived products, materials of category 3, according to the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, with subsequent amendments, as well as of Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 of the Commission, with subsequent amendments, in the conditions provided by the sanitary-veterinary legislation in force.

Economic operators must take the necessary steps to conclude a contract framework with receiver operators for the transfer of food with a free food title.

The **free transfer of food is made to receiving operators or final consumers**, and they are prohibited from selling food to other operators in the food sector or the final consumer. Economic operators who transfer food free of charge to receiving operators, according to the provisions of this law, **benefit from the fiscal facilities**.

Public administration authorities and institutions have the obligation to take preventive measures and reduction of food waste when, in the framework of the activity carried out, there remain, or can remain food surpluses.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will:

- Create the national platform by 1 January 2025 for reporting data on food waste to economic operators;
- Publish on its website relevant annual data regarding the progress made for the prevention and reduction of food waste;
- Coordinate the development of informative materials for economic operators to prevent and reduce food waste, as well as with the perspective for economic operators to draft plans to reduce food waste; and
- Carry out information and awareness campaigns to prevent and reduce food waste, including the social and environmental impact of food waste.

The National Veterinary Sanitary and Food Safety Authority has the following obligations:

- To contribute to the development of informative materials for economic operators envisaging the prevention and reduction of food waste, as well as with the perspective for economic operators to draft plans to reduce food waste;

- To provide information to the economic operators involved and the receiving operators to achieve the objectives regarding preventing and reducing food waste; and
- To carry out consumer information and awareness campaigns to prevent and reduce food waste, including the social and environmental impact of food waste.

The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Forests and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in consultation with the National Veterinary Sanitary and Food Safety Authority, the National Authority for Consumer Protection, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance, draw up the **national strategy for the prevention and reduction of food waste** that

must be updated periodically for at most five years. It must include at least:

- General planning of actions to be taken to prevent and reduce food waste;
- Relevant data regarding the achievement of food waste prevention and reduction objectives;
- Quantifiable objectives for the next 5 years to prevent and reduce food waste;
- Actions to support and promote measures against food waste;
- Those responsible for achieving the objectives mentioned in the strategy; and
- The financial resources necessary for the implementation of each specific measure provided in part.





FBAR experience in Romania



Gabriel Sescu, President, Federația
Băncilor pentru Alimente din România



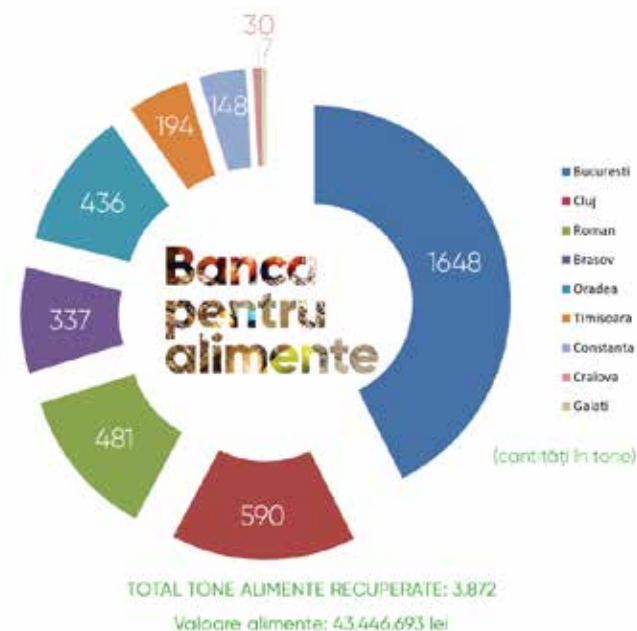
The Federația Băncilor pentru Alimente din România (FBAR) is a **big network of solidarity at the disposal of society, charitable organisations, and the most vulnerable**. FBAR is a bridge between the existence of surplus food and those who are in need.

We think that **nobody should be hungry and donating food is the most concrete and immediate means to respond to a primal need whose satisfaction cannot be delayed**. Donating food is the first step in considering the complex range of human needs. The benefits of our activity encompass social, economic, environmental, and educational advantages for the community.

Day by day, **we recover surplus food donated by the partners from the agri-food sectors** (producers, distributors, and retailers), thereby reducing food

FBAR in 2021

- 3,872 tonnes of surplus food have been recovered for a value of 43,446,693 Romanian lei.
- The food has been redistributed to 518 charitable organisations
- In this way, over 148,900 vulnerable persons could be assisted



waste, and maintaining the value of food perfectly suitable for human consumption. **We are redistributing the food for free to charities.**

FBAR has been founded in 2020 and became operational in the second half of 2021. With the role of coordination and representation with the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA), national authorities, mass media, corporate partners, and the sponsors that support us at the national level, **the activity consists of:**

- Promoting the recovery of surplus food and its redistribution to charitable organisations;
- Promoting policies fostering the fight against food waste; and
- Coordinating campaigns and events at the national level related to food collections, World Food Day, and the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste.

FBAR is inspired by and shares the values and principles of FEBA. In 2019, Banca pentru Alimente București received the status of FEBA Associate Member and in 2022, this membership has been transferred to FBAR.

FBAR is an active member of the Coalition Romania Sustainable and a partner of the Institute for Circular Economic and Environment „Ernest Lupan”.



The network is growing fast and today we have:

- **5 Full Members:** Regional Food Banks from Bucharest, Roman, Cluj, Braşov, and Oradea
- **4 Associate Members:** Regional Food Banks from Timișoara, Constanța, Craiova, and Galați.

Receiving food for free from the Food Banks allows the charities to redirect a part of their resources to cover other needs of the end beneficiaries.

Since 2019, FBAR has developed a food collection in collaboration with LIDL. The clients can make a gesture of solidarity by buying non-perishable products in the stores and by placing them in specially arranged boxes. Over **140 tonnes of food were donated within the 6 editions of this campaign.** Through charitable organisations, food arrived on the table of people in need.

A humanitarian crisis without precedent

For over 200 days the network of Romanian Food Banks supported Ukrainian refugees in various ways:

- **1,467 tonnes of food and hygiene products recovered and redistributed for the support of refugees in Romania, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine**
- **110 charitable organisations assisted in Romania**
- **Over 10,000 refugees are regularly supported in Romania**
- **Food collections in 212 LIDL, Kaufland, PENNY, Auchan, and Selgros stores with over 44 tonnes of collected food**
- **27 humanitarian transports of food to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova**
- **Over 653 tonnes of products were donated to people in need in Ukraine and Moldova; and**
- **1 humanitarian convoy was sent to the Food Bank from Chișinău (Republic of Moldova)**

Partners' experiences: private sector



Lelia Mancas, Marketing and Communication
Director, EDENRED Romania

As EDENRED, we are very committed to the topic of food waste. We have managed to work in this field for several years. We want to contribute to the community and be a connector between the authorities and the private sector.



We are so happy that we started this partnership with FBAR and that we have managed to be part of a fast-growing project as the one ongoing with FBAR. We are extremely proud that we were able to put in at least 200 hours of volunteering with our colleagues in Romania. This is how we managed to gather more than 900kg of products.

There were several other actions that we took, and our information campaign reached more than 8,000 commercial units. We are very aware of the fact that packaged products are very well regulated.

However, when we talk about the hotel, restaurant, and catering sector, things are not that easy: legislation is not clear and now, we do not have provisions, the stipulations regarding food waste reduction in restaurants.

But that is why we took the decision this year to **organise with our partners from MasterCard a study in restaurants regarding food waste** because we wanted to analyse food waste quantities and how we can contribute to supporting them in their combat against food waste.

The restaurants were very open to this survey and what we learned afterwards is that

more than 3/4 of restaurants have to deal with food waste and thereby lose a lot of resources. Half of the restaurants that were interviewed said that they waste between 1-5% of the ingredients, and among the most wasted products are fruit, vegetables, and meat. We also learned that the restaurants would like to eliminate food waste, either by donating the products or by selling them, and they would be very happy to have a legislative framework regulating this phenomenon. They also mentioned the fact that it would be useful to have good-practice guidelines telling them what they could do to reduce waste through how they purchase the ingredients to prepare the food.

We drafted this guide with our partners, and we are in the process of distributing this guide to the restaurants to support them. What we are very interested in is

working together with our partners, both in the online, private, and public sectors to foster the implementation of the norms, regulations, and legislation for the retail domain, which is already covered, but also to cover the hotel, restaurant, and catering field.

We are sure that we can contribute to improving the legislation. It will help the industry, of course, because we noticed that they need to reduce food waste, but it would also help the community and society because there are so many organisations and people that would need this food. What is happening in the retail sector is just the tip of the iceberg and we are sure that the hotel, restaurant, and catering industry could be a great contributor to this endeavour.



Cristina Hanganu, Communication and CSR Director, LIDL Romania

Six years ago, we met the founder of FBAR, Gabriel Sescu, who had a dream: his dream was to set the stone for the first Romanian Food Bank. As LIDL, we were worried about food waste. **The Food Bank has been and is the ideal solution to our problem.**

Our LIDL Sustainability team was fascinated, and we wanted to see if we could make this dream come true and even make it grow. We are so happy that the establishment of FBAR and its associated regional Food Banks was successful.

At this moment, the Food Bank network in Romania has more logistical centres than Lidl has. This is extraordinary because we are not talking here only

about LIDL, but also about other retailers, who donate to the Food Banks, manufacturers and other people and agents who can contribute.



Why are businesses working with the Food Bank? The Food Bank helps us reduce our impact on food waste and contribute to our objectives and the UN goals. We contribute to five of them if we fight against food waste. And very concretely, we save on food destruction costs, which are very high. Therefore, we should donate the overstock. Moreover, our donations reach communities that we directly do not reach because it's impossible to work with so many NGOs. We should have an army of people dealing just with that, but our main purpose is to sell our products.

More importantly, we can also trace the food donations. **We are sure that the transport and storage are done by the Food Banks according to food safety regulations.** Another argument to support Food Banks beyond the donation of food products is **to also donate money because Food Banks cannot work without money:** they have costs, and they need to cover these costs.

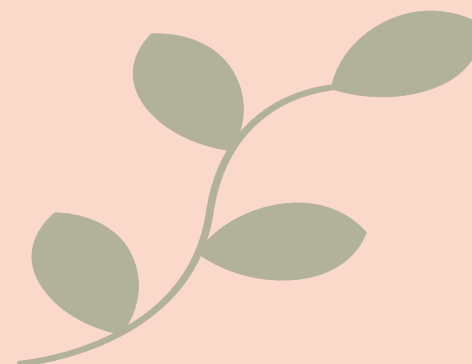
The sponsorship legislation in Romania is a generous one, enabling us to make generous financial donations, which are very important to take into account because this is how we can make this network grow and expand and continue to do their wonderful work.

To conclude, I would like to give you only one example of the hundreds I could give for the past six years of collaboration. **When the war broke out, as LIDL, we wanted to help, but we realised we did not have the expertise, we didn't know what to do and where to go.** And we did not want to waste our resources and energy. For this reason, we decided to get in touch with FBAR during the first days of the war, when the refugees were already coming. We wanted to donate products, we wanted to distribute them, to sort them out. We had blankets, shoes, and clothes. We did not know how to make these products reach

them quickly. FBAR in less than a day came to our storage facility, picked everything up, and they redistributed the items to the refugees. **In the second week of the war, LIDL donated 80 tonnes of products, food and non-food, mostly through the Food Banks.** Part of these emergency products reached the refugees in Romania and an important share also went across the border to Ukraine. **Our benefit was that we knew for sure that by collaborating with the Food Banks, the food was not wasted,**

and it reached exactly the persons and the communities who needed it. This reassured us and made us happy that what we did have an impact, a positive impact, on the life of the refugees and of the people affected by the war in Ukraine.

I hope we will still meet in at least six more years to talk about even bigger numbers and higher impact on the communities and society.





Gabriel Ivan, General Director
Romania and Bulgaria, CHEP

Four years ago, when we started this collaboration, I never expected for the FBAR team to be so successful.

Regarding our partnership, **our company is Australian, and sustainability is part of our DNA.** Our business model is sustainable in itself. I think that we were one of the creators of the circular economy without being aware of doing circular economy. Of course, the procedure wants us to renew

the contract, but we will be partners forever, I am sure of that.

In Romania, we have been collaborating for five years with FBAR and I have been part of this project for the past four years. It was very interesting to see people from the manufacturing area and the retailing field very invested in helping without having any profit or financial interest. CEOs and communication officers were

all guided by the same purpose of doing good, helping people, to support communities. This is only possible because Gabriel Sescu and his team surround themselves with good and passionate people, who share a passion for the community and society.

CHEP and FBAR will be together and will run together on a long and fruitful path to support disadvantaged people.



The Food Bank system goes hand in hand with what we consider needs to be done and with the projects that we want to be a part of. We recently renewed our commitment to being supporters of FEBA and I am sure that this will be a long ongoing collaboration.





Claudia Ivan, Sustainability Manager,
Penny Romania

We started a partnership with the Romanian Food Bank about five years ago. We began to collaborate via a METRO initiative. There was this meeting where most of the retailers met around the same table, trying to put up the same initiative and it was quite unimaginable at that point for us to participate in a project that was initiated by METRO, it was coordinated by Lidl, and then Penny was invited.

What does it mean to collaborate with the Food Bank? We have been collaborating based on the law to fight against food waste for the past year **there is a network of 30 stores with four logistical centres and we have managed to donate 300 tonnes of food products**. Probably, this would mean over 600,000 meals. This is how we joined this initiative of the Food Bank because this was the main partnership to reduce food waste. We try to manage our stocks as responsibly as possible, but there is always an overstock, which we try to redirect to the Food Bank.

The relationships created by the Food Bank give us the confidence that this is a worthy, trusting partner to work with in the future. I would like to encourage everyone

to partner with the Food Bank because this network does respond very quickly to emergencies. They can use anything that we provide, any kind of items that we donate. I am not sure how many other organisations can do this, to make the most of the food that we donate.

We are present in the heart, and we have a footprint throughout the entire country. Whenever we need them or whenever they need us, we are there.



We will continue to support FBAR for its precious work and credibility. In the last week, we did a regional visit to the Food Bank and out of their needs we identified two main aspects: firstly, the need for digitalisation and, secondly, the need to modernise their logistical network. They will need financial support from us and hopefully, together we will be able to set up a project so that FBAR can continue to work in the long term as well and efficiently as possible. As Penny, we will continue to support them, to support food security in Romania.

Partners' experiences: charitable organisations



Violeta Biltac, President & Founder
Banca de Bine

“Banca de Bine” is the “Bank for Good” and we have collaborated with the Food Bank of Romania for about a few years. I can resume this in three words: **solidarity, involvement, and mutual support.**

In the beginning, I was a bit shy because I didn't know how to fulfil the ambition of helping 100 children by donating food, clothes, and shoes, and we wanted to also give them some additional meals or sweets. My colleagues were encouraging me to put the subject on the table.

I will share with you a single concrete example that is very dear to me. We went to a village in the county of Teleorman. We usually provide a lot of material donations in that county; we always sanitise these donations and then take them to various centres. When we opened the trunk of our car with all those bags of sweets in it some

of the kids said: “Wow, look at those bags... just like on TV!”. They had never seen such sweets. They had never tasted something like that. **For those children, this experience was mesmerising in the sense that they could try for the first time in their life a product that was not only of high quality but also a product that had been donated by retailers like those who are supporting the activities of the FBAR.** Therefore, I would like to thank the FBAR and all their partners for your sustained efforts, involvement, and engagement.

I believe that once these children are helped, and then they become adults, **they will preserve the memory that sometimes, in their life, in the past, someone made them happy**, and we know that the first ten years of the child's life are the most important of that person's life. Therefore, our work is even

more important because as adults, we remember the things we have and the things we did not have during our childhood, the needs that were not met during our childhood.

”

I hope that the collaboration between Banca de Bine and the FBAR will continue to be just as good in the future and I also want to add that there is a need for volunteering also for the FBAR. The amount of work that they have to do is tremendous, including from a physical standpoint. We hope that we can always be by your side.



Marius Cocut, Director
Asociația Caritas

Asociația Caritas is based in Bucharest. Our programmes are tailored for Romanian beneficiaries as well as migrants or refugees.

Regarding the programmes for Romanian beneficiaries, we have a centre for 14 young boys, and **we assist 100 families to whom we send packages of food products up to 3 times a month, depending on their needs.** Last year this time, we only had the children's centre and I have to say that our menus and meals were quite repetitive. Since we started to collaborate with the FBAR, we have been able to rotate the meals. **We have 100 meals every day, around 40 for the children's centre and the rest for the families. We have about 15 young people with serious disabilities, either mental or physical disabilities,** whom we also provide food for, and we have another **20 children who are refugees from Ukraine** and who receive a meal, a lunch every day. With the help of the Food Bank, we have managed to organise a meal for about 80 people. The Catholic Church celebrated on 13 November the 6th Global Day of Eradicating Poverty and we managed to provide a meal for 50

persons, and we also organised a meal for about 30 homeless people in a village. Two kids wanted to help bake cakes for us: they needed flour, eggs, and cocoa, and we got all these ingredients from the Food Bank. The boys managed to bake some goodies for everyone, for 100 people, making those homeless people cry. Can you imagine that

you as a homeless person see a s–mall child coming to you and giving you some cookies or some sweets? **I think we would not have been able to do this without the help of the Food Bank.** Because of course, when you look at the list of ingredients, you will always think of how much these



ingredients cost. But thanks to the help of the FBAR, we managed to carry on with this project.

The second large group of beneficiaries of our initiatives is the group of refugees from Ukraine. Sadly, there are a lot of refugees and they come to us every day. **We are currently helping about 7,000 refugees, of whom about 60 to 70 new people come every day from Bulgaria, Moldova, or Ukraine.** This made us rethink the way that we were redistributing the food products because we couldn't help them directly. Winter is coming, some people were queuing in front of our centre, which is a church. They were queuing from 5:00 in the morning to wait for their food or packages, so they had to wait for us to go to the Food Bank to pick up food and discharge the goods. If you are waiting in front of the church from 5:00 to 12:00, you are going to be angry. Some people were not keeping the queue. They tried to get in the front, so some people were a bit frustrated with this system.

For this reason, we started to digitalise our system: if we know that we are going to the Food Bank tomorrow, today I will send a message on Signal or WhatsApp to those refugees who need our help. We know that tomorrow we will have a certain number of packages, 400 packages for instance - we will always keep a margin of 30 packages for elderly people who do not have access to WhatsApp or other social media - this is how we manage to distribute everything in about 3 hours. Sadly, we cannot even

help them every week. **Sometimes we help them with packages every two or three weeks because we do not have enough products to help them weekly.** Some of them need these products every week, but we try to assist them on at least a bi-weekly basis. We would need about 7 to 8 food trucks every week to be able to help them as much as we can, but we do not have those trucks. We have a lot of people coming from Constanța because the train is free for them. From there, they come over to Bucharest to get products.

I talked with the Ukrainian ambassador in Romania, mentioning our project and

he asked me where all this food comes from, and I explained how this collaboration between Caritas and the FBAR works. Therefore, he wanted to help us, and we have done some calculations.

At the end of September, we had about 150 tonnes of food that we redistributed to the Ukrainian refugees, which would have meant hundreds of thousands of euros if we had had to pay for them. Not being recovered and redistributed, this food would have been wasted and all the money would have been lost. I hope that in the future the Food Bank will continue to do just as well, if not better, and we will be able to keep our great partnership.



Alin Panican, Founder,
Fundația Bread of Life

The concept of food banking is amazing since it is a win-win solution for companies that are saving money by donating food and communities being blessed by that amount of food.

I have flashbacks from my childhood. The other day, my wife

was cooking something at home with lard and I was there watching her cook the meat with lard. I remembered 30 years ago when I was a child in post-communist Romania and everybody who was born until the 80-90s can remember what lard was. I took a little bit of bread and put some lard on it. I ended up eating 4 slices. I shortly realised that back then, everybody had the symbols of poverty because that is what

lard was meaning for us. We did not have butter, so we put lard on the bread. We did not have meat, so we ate products of soya. We did not have other things, so we ate polenta. Seeing that brought me flashbacks from childhood and it hurt me because I realised that, even though we are 30 years past the Communist era, if you leave the cities, and go a little bit outside, you can find people that are in a worse condition that we were 30 years ago.

We were shocked in our activities to discover that in Romania in the 21st century, children had no clue what pasta or rice is because they never had that in their life. To see the need for social inclusion today, which is much greater than it used to be years ago, **the partnership with the FBAR is the biggest partnership we have.** We are happy to see that this partnership has grown and there are multiple Food Banks now and to see that beyond everything that is going perfect for the companies, everything that is going excellent for the state, there is a big system that is being put together to eventually help people of Romania, the poor of Europe, and Ukraine.

This is what I am extremely thrilled about. I liked that companies are happy, and you get to see all of them sitting at the same table feeling good about something that they do. But it is more than that. **It is a journey in which we are together, that brings fruits immediately by keeping children in families and not having the**



children flee from families and be held in the street crime. It also bears fruits in the long term, because by keeping poor children in families, you end up having children that are being raised to the age of being able to pick up jobs and become the future workforce of Romania. For this reason, I think that food banking is a multiple win-win solution: companies that are helping children through the Food Bank by giving them food now, or companies that will benefit from this growing workforce in the future.

”

Together with the other NGOs, we are happy to have this partnership with the Food Bank and we encourage all the companies that can keep this partnership to help the Food Bank go beyond the amazing success that they have today. Why not have one Food Bank in every county of Romania? Or why not recover more tonnes and have better infrastructure and logistics than they have today? By helping them, we help the children, which ends up helping the state of Romania.

Charities supporting Ukrainian refugees in collaboration with Banca pentru Alimente București

Asociația Caritas

Food received from Banca pentru Alimente București and donated by retail chains as well as the Food Bank Greece is redistributed by the charity to **almost 300 Ukrainian families** weekly.

Thereby, around 750 people, are assisted. Since food donations for refugees are decreasing, the quantities are only sufficient to support a limited number of people. Hence, registered beneficiaries receive a message when food products are available.

AIDRom

A shelter for Ukrainian refugees, in particular Roma people, where **more than 13,000 refugees have been hosted since the outbreak of the war.**

Currently, 200 people are assisted on the premises of a former school, living in the classrooms and the gym hall is used as a transitory space. The refugees stay there for a varying duration, from 5 days to 3 months, before moving to other European countries such as Germany and Belgium or the UK. The shelter is being supported with food products provided by Banca pentru Alimente București.





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