

FEAD, REACT-EU, ESF+ and the European Food Banks Federation

2022 Implementation Report





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1.

About this report

This report focuses on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) according to the activity of the members of the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA). It aims to provide a summary of the final implementations of these funds in 2022 as well as an outlook into the planned transition to and execution of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).



By conducting their daily activities, FEBA Members who benefitted from the FEAD and/or REACT-EU have been key players in the pursuit of objectives of these funds, i.e. the support of the most deprived, and will continue on this path under the ESF+. For this reason, FEBA drafted and circulated a tailored survey in September 2023 to gather information about their experiences. FEBA Members have provided qualitative and quantitative data to feed this report.

The report refers to the period from January to December 2022 and is based on the responses of 10 FEBA Members.¹

¹ Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Spain. As regards the number of quantity of food redistributed, the report includes Portugal and is derived from data about the impact of FEBA membership in 2022.

2.

FEAD, REACT-EU, and the European Food Banks Federation: an overview

In 2014, around 122 million people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the 28 EU Member States – a quarter of the population (Eurostat, 2015). This means they were in at least one of the following situations: at risk of monetary poverty (17.2 % of the total population); living in households with very low work intensity (11.1 %); or **severely materially deprived (9.0 %)**.



Since the onset of the 2008 financial and economic crisis, fighting poverty and social exclusion became a key priority for the European Union. One of the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy was to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 20 million by the end of the decade.



Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)

Striving to alleviate the worst forms of poverty, such as food deprivation, child poverty, and homelessness, within the European Union by supporting Member States' action, the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)** was set up in 2014. The FEAD has supported Member States' actions to provide food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived.



This has included food, clothing, and other essential items for personal use, such as shoes, soap, and shampoo. For the seven-year programming period covered by the 2014–2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, over **EUR 3.8 billion** in current prices have been earmarked by the EU to pursue this objective. Complemented by the Member States' own resources, the value of the fund amounts to a total of **EUR 4.5 billion**. FEAD has complemented national social inclusion efforts as well as other EU funds, notably the European Social Fund.

The existing fund was amended a few times, as part of the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+), including through enabling the purchase of protective equipment for those delivering food aid. In addition, food and basic material assistance could be delivered through vouchers.



Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU)

In addition, the **Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU)** has extended the crisis response and crisis repair measures delivered through the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and the CRII+, topping up resources to the 2014-2020 programming period that could also be used for the FEAD. The final date of eligibility for these funds is set on 31 December 2023.



Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE)

Finally, the **Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE)** has allowed Member States to provide emergency support to people fleeing from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, introducing the necessary flexibility in the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy rules to allow a swift reallocation of available funding to such emergency support.²

² European Commission, Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Summary of the annual implementation reports for the operational programmes co-financed by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in 2020, 20 July 2022.

FEAD: recap of the accomplishments of the 2014 – 2020 programming period

- **23 Member States** chose a programme focusing on **food or basic material assistance support** through meals, food packages or basic consumer items such as school supplies and toiletries.
- **4 Member States** chose a programme focusing on social inclusion support to the most deprived through dedicated outreach to specific target groups.
- **Over 2,460,000 tonnes of FEAD food** were provided to almost **90 million people in need**.
- **EUR 69.2 million in basic material assistance** has been handed out to approximately **4.9 million end beneficiaries**.³
- The support was complemented by **accompanying measures** to promote the social inclusion of the end recipients.
- Member States cooperated with **Partner Organisations** (public bodies or non- profit organisations) to implement the FEAD programmes.



Since it entered into force in 2014, some of the FEBA Members have been involved in the implementation of the FEAD and they have contributed to the **delivery of food and/or basic goods to charities helping people in need**. Although the core mission of FEBA Members consists of preventing food waste and reducing food insecurity through the recovery and redistribution of safe and edible surplus food prevented from becoming food waste, the FEAD has represented an important complementary source of supply.

³ Ibid.

Type of assistance

Member State



Food



Basic material assistance



Social inclusion

BE / BG / EE / ES / FI / FR / IT / MT / PL / PT / SI

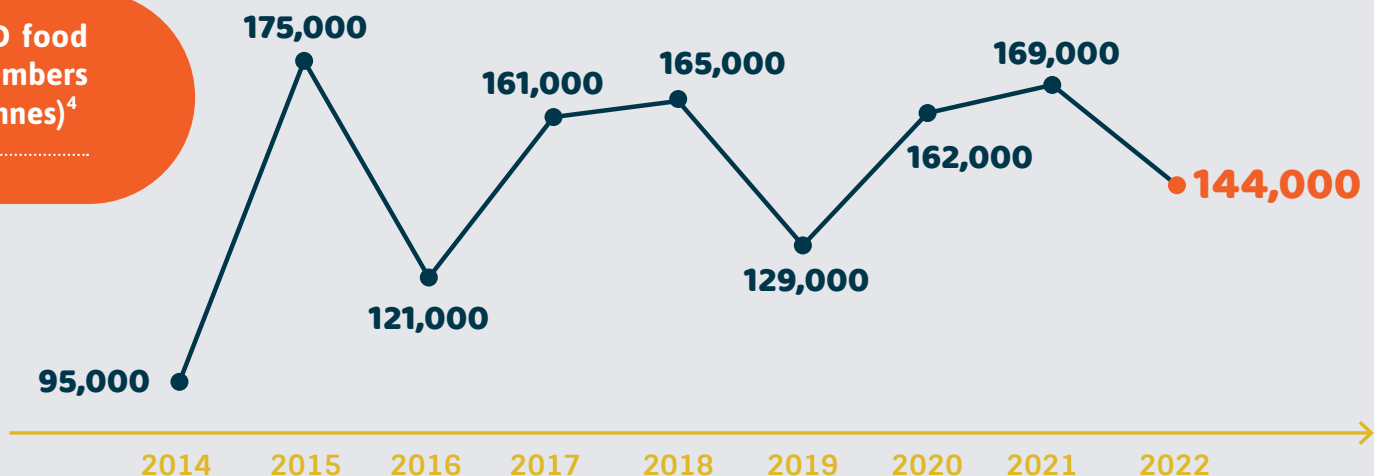
AT

Both food and material assistance

CY / CZ / EL / HR / HU / IE / LT / LU / LV / RO / SK

DE / DK / NL / SE

Fig. 1 Quantities of FEAD food redistributed by FEBA Members between 2014-2022 (in tonnes)⁴



In 2022

95.3M



people in the EU (22% of the population) were **at risk of poverty or social exclusion**, i.e. lived in households experiencing at least one of the three poverty and social exclusion risks such as risk of poverty, severe material and social deprivation, and/or living in a household with very low work intensity. The figure remained relatively stable compared with 2021 (95.4 million, 22% of the population).

In addition in 2022,

8.3%

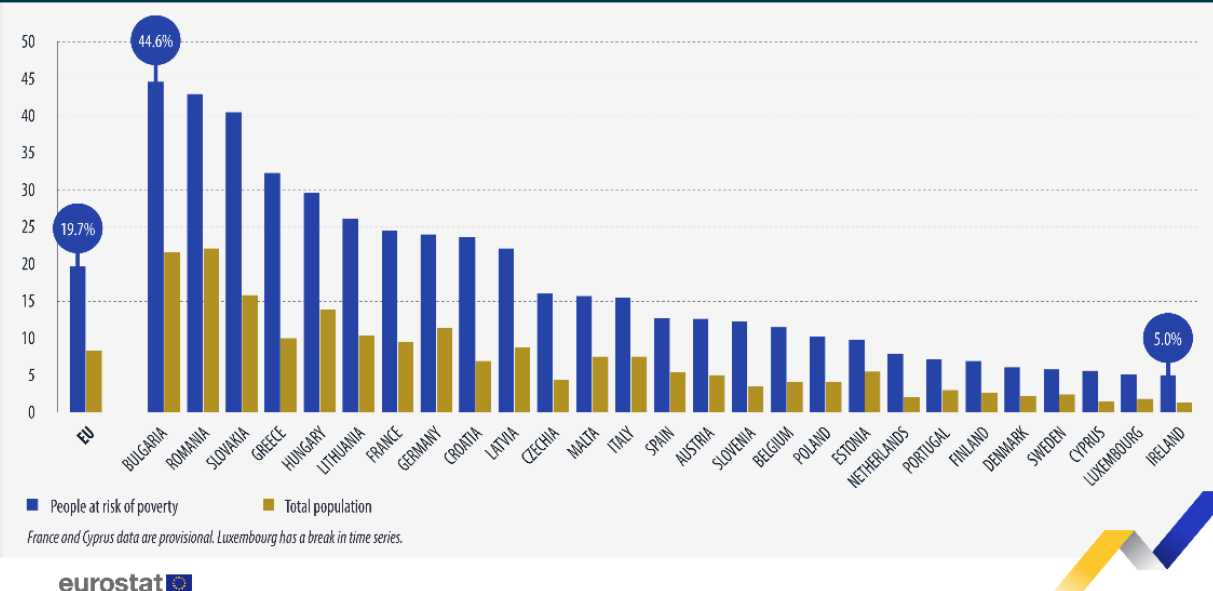
of the EU population was unable to afford a meal containing meat, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every second day, one percentage point (pp) higher compared with 2021 (7.3%).

The difference between total and at-risk-of-poverty population in terms of capacity to afford a proper meal was also visible across EU countries: the highest share of people at risk of poverty unable to afford a proper meal was recorded in Bulgaria (44.6%), followed by Romania (43.0%) and Slovakia (40.5%). On the other hand, the lowest share was recorded in Ireland (5.0%), followed by Luxembourg (5.1%) and Cyprus (5.6%).⁵

⁴ The numbers have been calculated based on information communicated through the online data collection platform underlying the FEBA Observatory on Food Donation.

⁵ European Commission, "How many people can afford a proper meal in the EU?", 10 July 2023

Fig. 2 Share of the population unable to afford a meal with meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day, 2022 (%)



As regards the European Food Banks Federation, **in 2022, 11 FEBA Members, notably Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Spain, distributed food and/or basic goods funded with the FEAD and/or REACT-EU to charities helping people in need.**

In particular, **9 FEBA Members** located in Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Spain received and redistributed **143,888.54 tonnes of food products**

financed through the FEAD and **3 FEBA Members** based in Belgium, Estonia, and France managed the provision of **9,276.06 tonnes of food** through REACT-EU to people in need including the reimbursement of administrative costs.⁶

9 FEBA Members received an **economic reimbursement for operating and administrative costs** (Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, and Spain through the FEAD as well as Belgium and Estonia through REACT-EU).

⁶ The numbers have been calculated based on information communicated through the online data collection platform underlying the FEBA Observatory on Food Donation. It is important to point out that in France the distributed food was purchased through REACT-EU funds in 2021 and distributed in 2022.

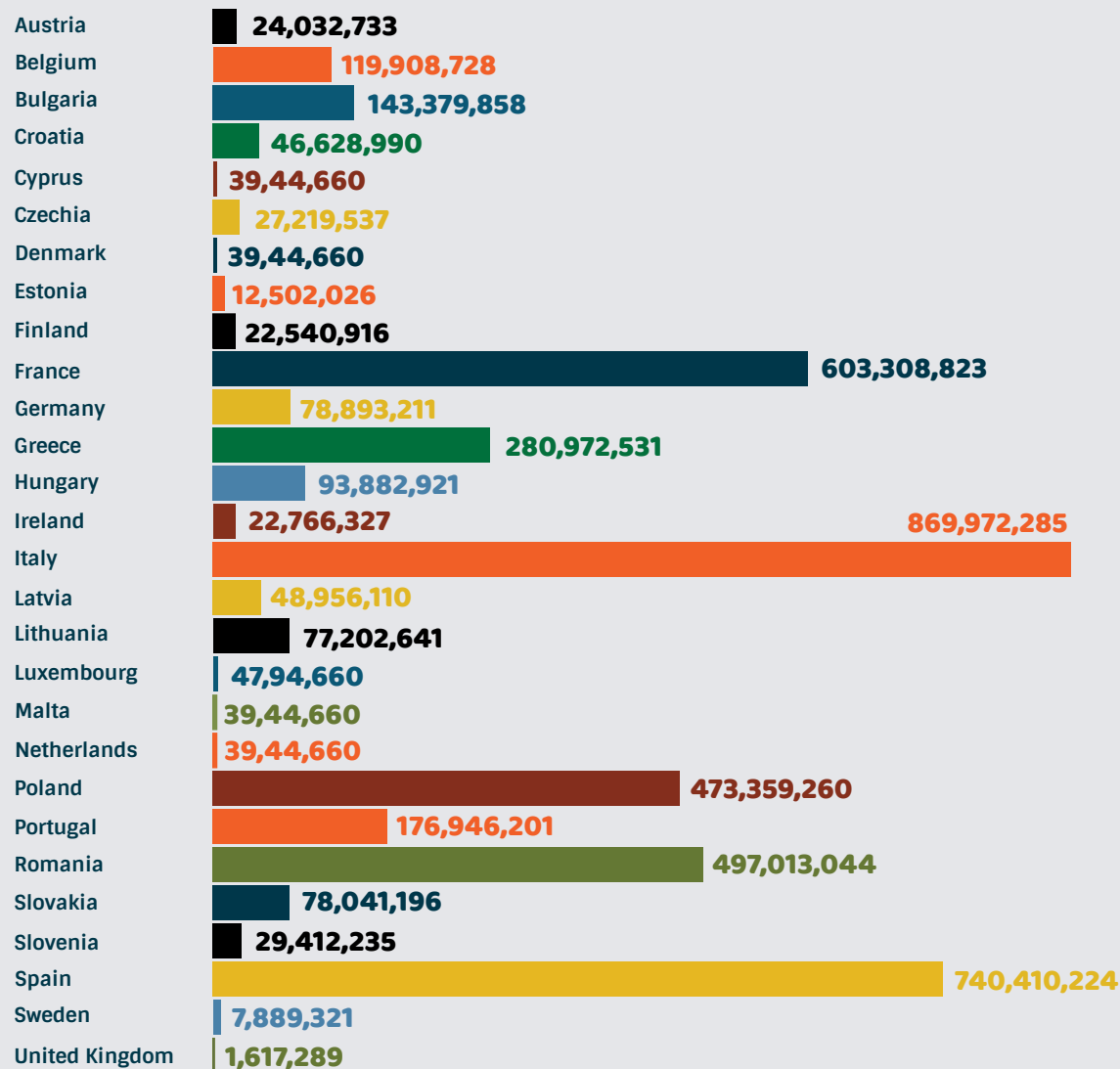


Overall, the total budget allocated for FEAD and REACT-EU in 2021 and 2022 amounted to **EUR 4.5 billion**, which can be divided into the following budget per country.⁷

The countries with the highest budget were Italy, Spain, France, Romania, Poland, and Greece, which focused mostly on OP I, food support or basic material assistance.

⁷ European Commission, ESF+ Community of Practice on Material Deprivation, 2023

Fig. 3 FEAD and REACT-EU allocation (2021 and 2022, in million)



3.

FEAD in 2022: Key findings



FEBA Members received and redistributed food financed through FEAD and/or REACT-EU resources in 2022.⁸

- Among the countries mentioned, the FEBA Member in **Estonia and Belgium** are the only ones who were **involved solely in REACT-EU**.
- FEBA Members in **Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Spain** redistributed only **FEAD food and/or material assistance**.

Almost
90%

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

⁸ No information from FEBA Member in Portugal.



Use of FEAD in 2022

- **8 FEBA Members** benefited from foodstuff, 3 members (33.3%) from non-food items (such as hygiene products), and 2 members (22.2%) received assistance to improve their technical capacities as well as support for Partner Organisations.
- **4 FEBA Members (44.4%)** of the responding FEBA Members, i.e. France, Lithuania, Poland, and Spain, undertook accompanying measures, among them brochures with the closest social resources, culinary workshops, workshops on not wasting food, economic education workshops, financial literacy lectures, and volunteering in Food Bank activities.
- **7 FEBA Members** involved in the FEAD received economic reimbursement of some kind for conducted activities.



9 FEBA Members located in Czechia, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Portugal received FEAD.

↘ Total amount of FEAD food for the 9 FEBA Members

143,888.54t

of FEAD food redistributed

16.4%

of the total amount of food redistributed by European Food Banks (876,316 tonnes of food) was FEAD food.

↘ Out of these 9, 8 FEBA Members worked with:



↗ **14,151 Charitable Organisations** received FEAD products.

↗ **4,873,859 end beneficiaries** benefitted from FEAD basic material assistance.

In relation to **quantity, quality, variety, and nutritional value**, respondents expressed a positive opinion of FEAD food. The variety of the FEAD food ranged mostly from staple foods like rice, flour, and pasta and canned fruits and vegetables which all of the respondents received. This is closely followed by canned fish or meat, dairy products, and oil. Some members also received coffee or tea, comfort food, and baby food.

Fig. 4 Typologies of FEAD products received and redistributed by FEBA Members in 2022

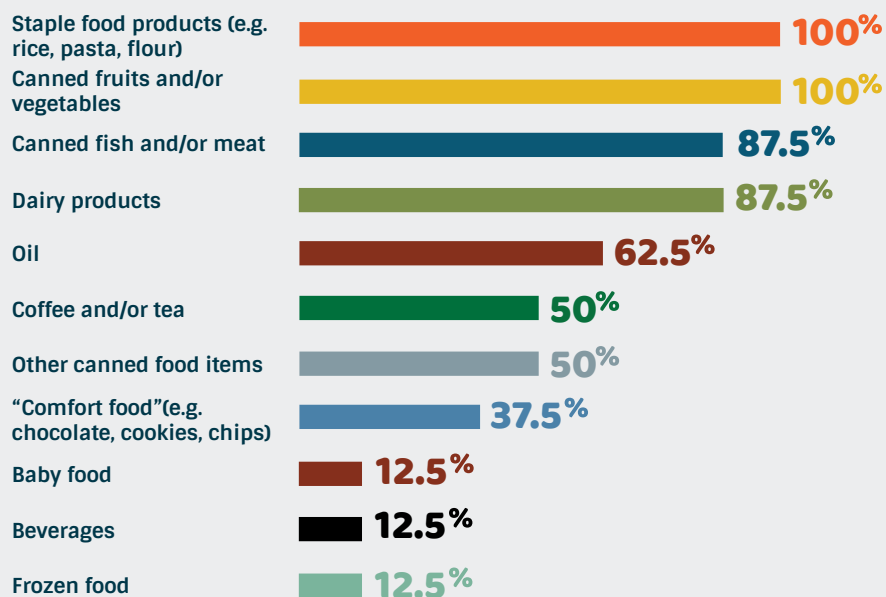
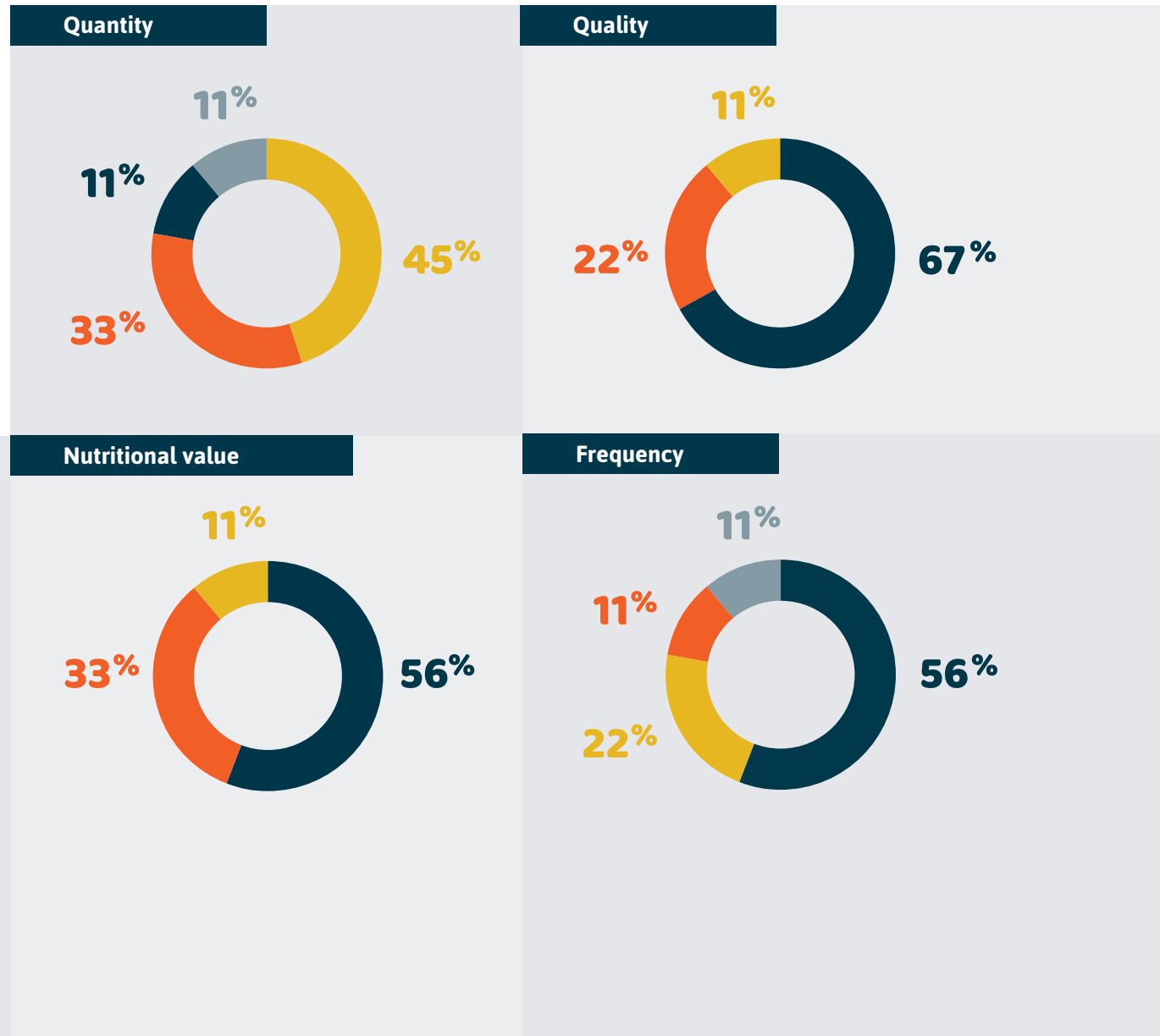


Fig. 5 Quantity, Quality, Variety, Nutritional Value, and Frequency



In relation to FEAD food, how do you evaluate ...

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor



At the national level, the FEAD is implemented by Managing Authorities (MA) in collaboration with a variety of Partner Organisations (PO) such as FEBA Members and other civil society organisations. Some questions of the survey focused on the relationship between Managing Authorities and FEBA Members. For most members there was a mutual collaboration with the Managing Authorities, approaching each other.

Fig. 6 Collaboration with Managing Authority

? How do you evaluate the collaboration with the Managing Authority in your country in 2022?

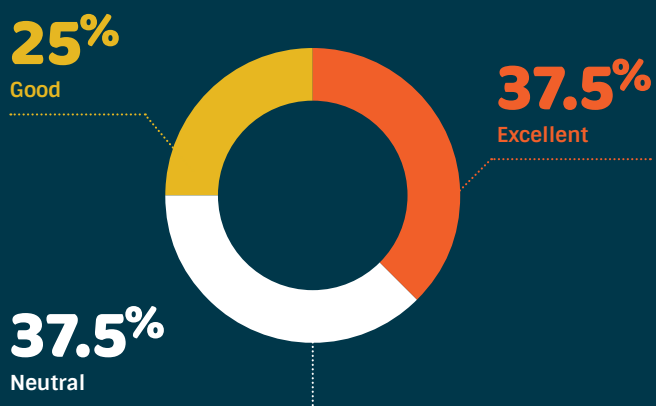
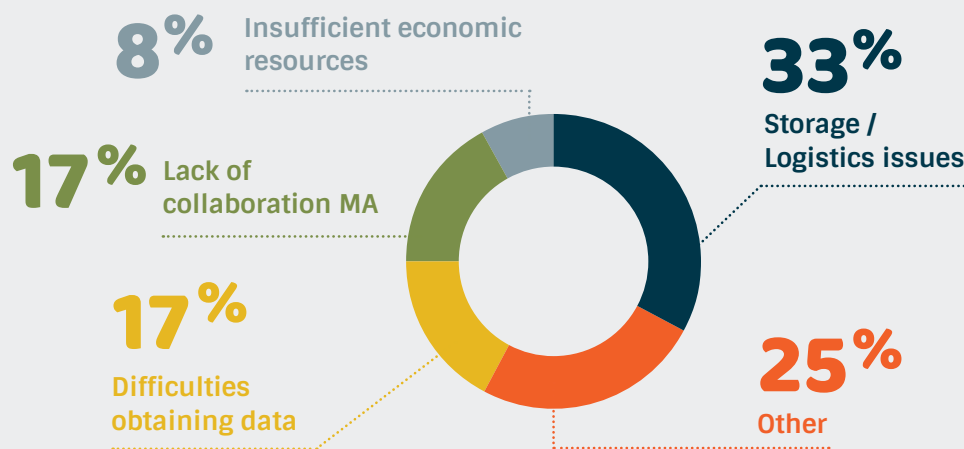


Fig. 7 FEAD Challenges in 2022

? What were the main challenges related to FEAD in 2022?



The survey highlighted some **challenges** like storage and logistics issues, difficulties in collecting data about the implementation of the programme, lack of collaboration with Managing Authority, and insufficient economic resources for administrative, transport, and storage costs. Other challenges that the FEBA Members faced in 2022 are related to unsuccessful tenders due to the war and inflation, varying size of charities and partner organisations as well as fluctuating quantities and decreased budget.

4.

REACT-EU 2022: Key findings

Use of REACT-EU in 2022

- **2 FEBA Members** benefited from **foodstuff**, **1 member (50%)** from **non-food items** (such as hygiene products).
- **Both FEBA Members** involved in the REACT-EU received **economic reimbursement** of some kind for conducted activities.



2 FEBA Members located in Belgium and Estonia received REACT-EU.

Total amount of REACT-EU food for the 2 FEBA Members

- **9,276.06 tonnes** of REACT-EU products.
- **5 Partner Organisations** involved in REACT-EU.
- **443,378 end beneficiaries** redistributed REACT-EU products.



When it comes to the typology of food, FEBA Members in Belgium and Estonia received **fish and meat as well as oil**. Estonia received more canned products and staple products but also comfort food. Regarding non-food products on the other hand these were only received by Belgium, like **baby nappies, personal hygiene products, and tampons for women**. The selection of these products was decided by the Managing Authority in Estonia and in Belgium by the Managing Authority in agreement with Partner Organisations. Overall, both Food Banks rated the quantity, variety, frequency, and nutritional value as good, however, the quality was also rated as fair. There were not accompanying measures for these funds.

The cooperation with the Managing Authority was rated overall good and was based on mutual approaches towards each other. Nonetheless, it becomes clear that Food Banks had almost no influence on the allocation of REACT-EU in their countries. Main challenges related to REACT-EU were quality issues with food products received and storage or logistics issues.

5.

Transitioning from FEAD to ESF+: implications for FEBA Members

The transition to the ESF+, therefore, concerns the Food Banks belonging to the FEBA network in the above-mentioned countries, albeit to a different extent.

Regarding material support in the ESF+, the aim is to ensure the continuation of support to the most deprived through food and/ or basic material assistance (Article 4.1.(m) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), as well as through social integration measures (Article 4.1.(l) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1057). The ESF+ aims to promote synergies between ESF+ and FEAD support, whilst preserving lighter rules for FEAD-type support. Moreover, Member States shall allocate at least 3% of their ESF+ resources to the specific objective m) or, in duly justified cases, to objective l).⁹

⁹ European Commission, ESF+ Community of Practice on Material Deprivation, 2023





On the one hand, most Member States have chosen different forms of support for addressing material deprivation:

- Specific objective (m) integrated into a **comprehensive ESF+ programme** (CZ, CY, EL, FI, FR, HU, HR, IT, LU, MT, NL, PT, SK);
- Specific programme addressing **material deprivation** (BG, BE, EE, ES, LT, LV, PL, SI);
- **Direct support:** distribution of food, other material support (BG, EL, LV, PL, FR, HU, IT, SI, LU, IE, BE, NL, SK);
- **Indirect support:** distribution of vouchers (ES, LT, FI, EE, RO);
- Complement the **delivery of food and/or basic material assistance** by accompanying measures;
- On the other hand, some Member States (DE, DK, and SE) are planning to implement **social inclusion assistance**, while Austria is considering other measures.

In terms of budget, the minimum requirement is to allocate at least 3% of ESF+ resources to material support, but most Member States will exceed this threshold. Regarding eligible costs, in addition to the cost of purchasing food and/or basic material assistance, including costs related to transporting food and/or basic material assistance to the beneficiaries delivering the food and/or basic material assistance to the end recipients, the ESF+ has foreseen a flat rate of 1% on purchase costs to cover transport and storage; a flat rate of 7% on administrative, transport, and storage costs borne by beneficiaries; the possibility to cover the cost of collection, transport, storage, and distribution of food donations; and a flat rate of 7% on accompanying measures.



[Read more about planned EU financing to address material deprivation under the ESF+](#)

At this time it is important to take stock of the results achieved by the FEAD as well as gather and exchange information about the challenges and opportunities in transitioning to the ESF+ for material support programmes. The FEBA EU Working Group and the ESF+ Community of Practice on Material Support are the best opportunities to accumulate knowledge in the field of material support, share know-how, and advance in the implementation of the ESF+.



FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation: 2019 Implementation Report



FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation: 2020 Implementation Report



FEAD and the European Food Banks Federation: 2021 Implementation Report

For a more comprehensive overview on the implementation of FEAD by European Food Banks, read our previous yearly reports!

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