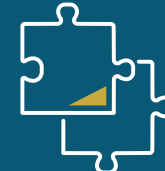




# FEBA EU Working Group 2024 REPORT



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# 1. About this report

**This report aims to highlight the activities of the FEBA EU Working Group in line with the relevant international and EU policy developments of 2024.**

In 2024, the FEBA EU Working Group was composed of **30 Food Bank representatives from 22 FEBA Members – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Spain.**

Since it was established in 2018, the working group has aimed to bring together the positions of FEBA and its members in one single voice and advocate for common interests at both the EU and international level.

The year 2024 was marked by the European elections, changes in the European Commission and various national elections around Europe and the world.



## Key achievements in 2024

- **8 meetings of the FEBA EU Working Group** (7 online and 1 in person) and regular exchanges via email
- **1 peer-to-peer session** to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices on agricultural recovery of surplus food
- The **FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion 2024**
- Dealing with EU topics at the **FEBA Annual Convention 2024**
- Participation in **6 EU fora**
- Active participation in **over 15 high-level events organised by EU institutions or international and European organisations and stakeholders**
- **1 report** with insights on EU-related topics
- **1 FEBA position** contributing to the EU policy-making process
- **4 requests for insights** feeding into EU policymaking
- Circulation and analysis of **2 questionnaires** to monitor the past and future implementation of **EU funding programmes**

## 2. What's at stake at international and EU level?

→ **The year 2024 (aka, the “super-election year”), saw more than 76 countries around the world hold elections.** This includes the European Parliament elections, which were held in June 2024. Every five years, voters choose over 700 Members of the European Parliament. Once elected, they sit in political groups based on shared beliefs. They also approve the College of Commissioners and the President of the European Commission. 2024 therefore marked as a year of changes, not only in the composition of the European institutions, but also the different political priorities that come with it.

→ **The Commission underlined the transition of the agri-food system as a key policy priority through the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture, in which FEBA Honorary President Jacques Vandenschrik participated.** It remains to be seen whether the new Commission will focus on the results presented in the final report of said Strategic Dialogue. At the same time, there was no mention of the Farm to Fork Strategy in the Commissioner Mission Letters, suggesting a lack of future efforts and policy proposals in line with the goals set out in 2019 to reduce food waste and transition towards a more sustainable food system.

→ **Active implementation of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) started in 2024.** For some FEBA Members, this came in the form of direct material support, similar to under the previous FEAD programme.

However, due to changes in the conditions of the programme, others received hybrid support, such as in Lithuania, or had no further involvement in the programme, like the Food Bank in Spain. With the implementation of ESF+, some Food Banks also received direct material support for the first time, as was the case with the Dutch Food Banks in the Netherlands. The progress of ESF+ will be continuously monitored in 2025.



**Overall, the year 2024 was marked by change and a shift in policy priorities at the European level. The implementation and development of these changes will also be followed closely by FEBA in 2025.**

### 3. FEBA's contribution to the international momentum



#### FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion 2024

The **FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion 2024** was held online. This event is an annual opportunity to promote dialogue on important topics related to food aid and social inclusion. Over the years, the FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion has addressed a variety of subjects from different perspectives and angles.

This year, it aimed to bring together FEBA Members and other stakeholders and experts to take stock of the most important policies on social

inclusion and food aid measures at the EU level (e.g. Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, REACT-EU, CARE, European Social Fund Plus, etc.).

More specifically, the event was an opportunity to consider how the distribution of material support can foster social inclusion as well as explore the measures taken by Food Banks and other partner organisations to strengthen social inclusion. A **final report** was released about this event.



How material support can pave  
the path towards social inclusion

**23**  
May  
**2024**



**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.**



For the fifth year in a row, FEBA has celebrated the **International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste** (IDAFLW) on 29 September.

This year, FEBA focused on tackling misconceptions about date labels by launching an educational video, shared on all communication channels and with networks across 30 countries. A lot of food waste happens in homes because people misunderstand the difference between **“Best before”** and **“Use-by”** dates. The video aimed to clarify these labels, helping people

understand which foods are still safe to eat and which may pose safety concerns. This misunderstanding is something Food Banks across Europe encounter regularly, as many people are unaware that food donations that are past the “Best before” date are allowed under European legislation.

The IDAFLW makes a clear **call to action for public and private entities from across the food system to work together to cut food loss and waste** and enhance the efficient use of natural resources, mitigate

climate change, and foster food security and nutrition. FEBA promoted this call to action **by organising a visit to the Brussels Food Bank together with the FAO Liaison Office Brussels and the UNEP Office Brussels**, as well as producing a campaign video about the visit for social media.

Moreover, leveraging this message, FEBA Members organised specific initiatives and awareness-raising campaigns to mark the IDAFLW.







## FEBA Annual Convention 2024

The **FEBA Annual Convention 2024**, entitled “*Building Sustainable Futures*”, was organised by FEBA in collaboration with Česká Federace Potravinových Bank (FEBA Member in the Czech Republic) and took place on 19–21 September 2024 as a hybrid event (Prague/online).

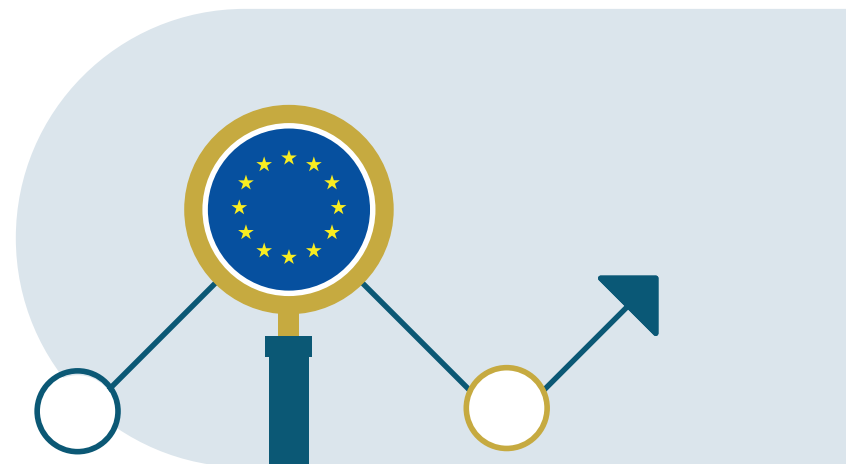
The Annual Convention was focused on the sustainable impact of Food Banks contributing to a more circular agri-food system. FEBA Members came together during the two-day conference and shared their thoughts and practices. Participants were actively involved in eight working sessions, including one on EU Policy and one on the Harvard Food Donation Policy Atlas.



## Building Sustainable Futures

## 4. EU policy developments in 2024

FEBA advocates for the interests of its members at the European and international levels. The work carried out throughout 2024 responded and contributed to a variety of cross-cutting EU policy developments.



### EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste

Tackling food waste means working together with all key players from public and private sectors in order to better identify, measure, and understand food waste as well as find solutions to prevent it.

FEBA has been a member of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste (FLW) since it was established in 2016 and has been appointed for the new mandate, from 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2026. The EU Platform on FLW brings together

EU institutions, experts from the Member States, and relevant stakeholders with a focus on reducing food loss and waste across the EU.



**FEBA participates in plenary sessions and is an active member of three sub-groups:**

- 1. Action & Implementation**
- 2. Food Donation**
- 3. Food Loss and Waste Monitoring**





## Key activities

### → Action & Implementation sub-group



**October 2024**

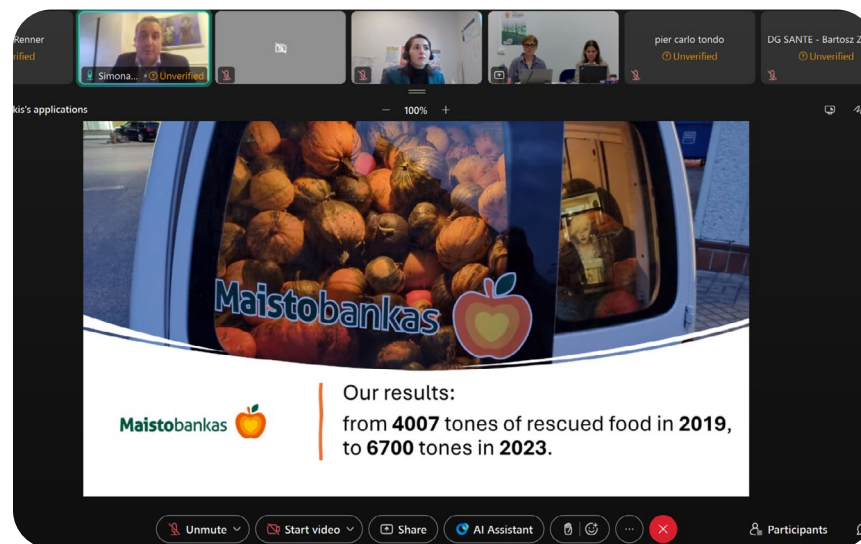
This sub-group session focused on the topic of primary production, where FEBA together with Maisto Bankas, its member from Lithuania, presented the activities of Food Banks relating to surplus recovery from the agricultural sector.

### → Food Donation sub-group



**September 2024**

Our Member from Denmark, Foedvare Banken, presented their activities to the sub-group on Food Donation as part of a session on “Barriers and opportunities for the redistribution of surplus food in the EU”.





## ESF+ Community of Practice (CoP) on Material Support

The expert group of the ESF+ Communities of Practice (CoP) facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise on ESF+, supervised by the European Social Fund Agency (ESFA). It brings together the Managing Authorities of the Member States and the NGOs and organisations that receive the funding.



**Five CoPs have been set up, covering different topic areas:**

- 1. Social Innovation**
- 2. Employment, Education and Skills**
- 3. Social Inclusion**
- 4. Migrant Integration**
- 5. Material Support**

In 2024, five events were attended by FEBA and its members, both online and in person.



**28 February / CoP Material Support: Digital Solutions / online**



**10-11 April / CoP Material Support / Athens, Greece**





## 1-2 October / Social Innovation Forum with a session on accompanying measures / Brussels, Belgium



The Social Innovation Forum 2024, held on October 1-2 in Brussels, brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners to explore how social innovation can address some of Europe's most pressing societal challenges.



**Organized by the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation, the forum focused on several key objectives:**

1. **Highlighting Essential Skills:** The forum emphasized the critical skills needed for social



innovators to thrive in today's complex landscape, ensuring they are equipped to drive impactful change.

2. **Showcasing Innovative Solutions:** Participants had the opportunity to learn from exemplary practices across Europe, with showcases of innovative solutions that effectively tackle various social issues.
3. **Facilitating Collaboration:** The event fostered collaboration and knowledge sharing among ESF+ Managing Authorities, implementing partners, and the broader social innovation community, paving the way for stronger partnerships and collective action.





### **20–21 November / Bridging Communities in Times of Crisis: Providing Material Support for Vulnerable Groups / Paris, France**

Taking place on 21–22 November 2024 in Paris (France), this event brought together different actors from the CoPs on Material Support and Social Inclusion.

The session gave insights into the implementation of ESF+ from the perspective of different Managing Authorities in France and the four major food aid networks involved in the activities: French Food Banks, Restos du Coeur, Red Cross and Secours Populaire.



### **12 December / CoP Material Support - End of Year meeting and Food Donation / online**



## **European Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism (EFSCM)**



**FEBA is a member of the Expert Group and takes part in two sub-groups. In 2024, FEBA attended two plenary meetings as well as several sub-group meetings.**

- **19 April 2024**
- **8 October 2024**



## **European Food Forum**

In May 2024, FEBA joined the European Food Forum, an independent, politically led, non-partisan, multi-stakeholder forum bringing together MEPs and stakeholders from different sectors, such as private and public organisations and NGOs as well as academia. Since, FEBA has participated in various events organised by the EFF and has also submitted key positions as part of the preparation for the Commissioner hearings.



## Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture

In January 2024, Jacques Vandenschrik (Honorary President of the European Food Banks Federation) was nominated *ad personam* by the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen to join the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture.

This was a unique space that brought together diverse voices in and on the periphery of the agri-food sector, engaging in meaningful discussions on the future of agriculture and food systems in the European Union.

The final report highlights recommendations that unify a range of viewpoints across the entire agri-food sector, setting strategic goals for the medium and long term and forging consensus for the future.



## 5. FEBA's key policy and advocacy activities in 2024



### EU Working Group meetings



FEBA organised one in-person meeting and seven online meetings, addressing a large variety of EU-related topics relevant for FEBA Members.



6 February

Summary of important events, developments, and activities foreseen in 2024.



5 March

EU Fruit & Vegetable Withdrawal Scheme, FEAD Evaluation, EU Grant opportunities.



9 April

Food Banks and the Urban Context – Working more with Cities (Horizon 2020).



4 June

Freezing Meat at Retail.



2 July

European Elections Results.



3 September

Digital Platforms, IDAFLW, FEAD-ESF+ Survey.



3-4 October

CSRD, DG Meetings, Recovery from Agriculture, Food Donation Policy Atlas.



3 December

Recap of 2024, Discussion of upcoming activities in 2025.



## Peer-to-Peer sessions



6 September

Exchange between **Fédération Française des Banques Alimentaires** (FEBA Member in France) and **FoodCloud** (FEBA Member in Ireland) on recovery of surplus food from agriculture.



## Conference



19-21 June

FEBA Annual Convention 2024 / Prague, Czech Republic



## Publications contributing to the EU policy-making process



6 September

Statement on the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture Report

ESF+ and the European Food Banks Federation. 2023 Implementation Report



## Participation in high-level events



**19 January**

“From farm to food donation. How to maximise the potential of preventing harvest losses to ensure food security?”: FEBA expert panel at the GFFA 2024 / Berlin, Germany



**25 January**

Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture / Brussels, Belgium



**19 February**

“Advancing food loss technologies and policies” European Parliament Panel / Brussels, Belgium



**5-7 March**

Food 2030 Conference “Transformative Food System Innovation” / Brussels, Belgium



**13 March**

FOODRUS Final Event / Brussels, Belgium



**10-14 April**

CoP Material Support “Involving the target group: from decision-making to the provision of support” / Athens, Greece



**12 April**

“Food Waste and Food Donation – Charting Progress and Future Directions” at the European Commission / Brussels, Belgium



**23 May**

FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion / online



**5 June**

Consumer Food Waste Forum / Brussels, Belgium



**9-12 September**

GFN Summit 2024 / Sydney, Australia



**18 September**

FAO & UNEP Campaign with FEBA for IDAFLW / Brussels, Belgium



**1-2 October**

Social Innovation Forum organised by the European Social Fund Agency / Brussels, Belgium



**9 October**

EU CAP Network event: 4th meeting of the Farm to Fork Forum / Brussels, Belgium



**20-21 November**

CoP Material Support “Meeting varying needs: how material support can be tailored to meet the diverse needs of different target groups” / Paris, France



**21 November**

Meeting with new MEPs / Brussels, Belgium

## 6. Looking forward to 2025

**Hungary currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from July to December 2024. Poland will take over from January to June 2025. Denmark is scheduled to assume the presidency in the second half of 2025.**



The coming year will be important in setting the agenda, seeing how different priorities develop and assessing which policy initiatives and legislative changes are introduced. In addition, negotiations of the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will shape the coming year.

FEBA defined its key priorities with a focus on the budget for ESF+ as well as for the newly announced Agri-food Just Transition Fund (AJTF) and will follow the debate closely.

## 7. Acknowledgement

thank  
you

The European Food Banks Federation takes this opportunity to express its deep gratitude for the support granted by the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion to enhance knowledge sharing and expertise in the policy field within the FEBA network.

We sincerely thank all the external stakeholders who enriched the meetings of the FEBA EU Working Group with their knowledge and time.

Most importantly we would like to thank all members of the FEBA EU Working Group 2024 for their commitment at both the national and EU level and for providing valuable insights into the implementation of EU policy on the ground. FEBA was delighted to have the chance to work with you on these topics and we hope to continue this fruitful collaboration for many years to come.



## European Food Banks Federation asbl - FEBA

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**#WeAreFEBA**

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