
Addendum to Contribution to the Call for Evidence on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy: Alignment with the European Commission Communication adopting the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy

Update reflecting EU developments as of 6 May 2026

On **6 May 2026**, the European Commission adopted the first-ever **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**, setting out a comprehensive approach to prevent and protect against poverty, support progress towards the **2030 poverty reduction target**, and contribute to the longer-term ambition to help **eradicate poverty in the EU by 2050**. The Strategy applies a life-cycle approach and places “active inclusion” at its core, combining labour market activation, effective access to essential goods and services, and adequate income support. It also recognises the impact of inflation and the rising price of basic goods, including food, on hardship and financial insecurity.¹

FEBA underlines that, because the Strategy relies substantially on governance, coordination, and guidance, delivery will depend on concrete national, regional and local implementation. This makes it essential that implementation frameworks explicitly integrate food insecurity, alongside housing, health, education, employment and income support, so that “access to essential goods and services” is realised in practice for people facing material deprivation.²

Context

In 2025, around **92.7 million people in the EU** were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, representing **20.9% of the population**. This means they lived in households experiencing at least one of three poverty and social exclusion risks: risk of poverty, severe material and social deprivation, or living in a household with very low work intensity. Although the share of people at risk declined between 2020 and 2025, poverty and social exclusion remain widespread across the European Union. Recent Eurostat reporting also points to persistent gender gaps, with women facing a higher risk than men, reflecting structural inequalities in exposure to poverty and social exclusion.³

The capacity to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish, or a vegetarian equivalent every second day is one of the items measured at household level to calculate the severe material and social deprivation rate, and it is widely used as a proxy for food-related hardship, according to the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.⁴ In 2025, around **8.5%** of the EU population were unable to afford such a meal every second day, as in 2024, and down by 1.0 percentage point from 2023 (9.5%). The gap was far wider among people at risk of poverty, where **20.3%** were unable to afford such a meal, compared with **6.2%** among those not at risk of poverty.⁵

¹ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

² European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

³ Eurostat, *Living Conditions in Europe – Poverty and Social Exclusion*, European Commission, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion

⁴ Eurostat, *European Pillar of Social Rights – Overview*, European Commission, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/overview>

⁵ Eurostat, DOI:10.2908/ilc_mdcs03

While inflationary pressures have eased compared with the 2022-2023 peak, food prices continue to place significant pressure on low-income households. Although lower than the historic highs recorded in 2023, sustained price increases continue to increase demand for food assistance, forcing many food banks to purchase additional food to compensate for declining donations and growing needs.⁶

This sustained pressure has not only increased the number of people in need but for several food banks this has meant that they have had to purchase additional food to fill this gap.⁷

The adopted EU Anti-Poverty Strategy confirms the issue of access to food at EU level, explicitly linking poverty dynamics to the cost-of-living crisis and noting that the rising price of basic goods, including food, drives increased hardship and insecurity. This framing should translate into clearer implementation priorities on food insecurity and material deprivation, including in monitoring, governance and investment decisions, so that “access to essential goods and services” is realised in practice for people experiencing poverty.⁸

Policy context

The current framework of EU social policy instruments, including the 2017 European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and its 2021 Action Plan, though nonbinding, set clear targets for poverty reduction and acknowledge the need for social protection, as well as access to essential services. In this regard, the 2021 EPSR Action Plan lays down that the EU aims to reduce poverty by 15 million by 2030. Yet, the EU is still far from achieving this goal. A stringent and ambitious Anti-Poverty Strategy is not only necessary to pave the road to reaching this objective but vital in order to reach Goal No. 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on the eradication of poverty in all its forms.

The first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy reiterates that stronger, sustained and more coordinated efforts are needed to progress towards the 2030 target. Because key elements rely on coordination, guidance and improved governance, implementation quality in Member States, especially real-life accessibility of support, will be decisive in delivering measurable impact on poverty and material deprivation.⁹

The Role of Food Banks for Poverty Alleviation

The right to food is embedded in poverty reduction. Many pathways that contribute to the alleviation of poverty, including education, health care and access to social services, presuppose access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. This is where food banks come in. Food banks provide tangible and essential food aid and material support, ensuring that the basic needs of the most deprived people are met.

Simultaneously, food banks are part of a vast and well-connected network of actors that facilitates accessibility to other pathways out of poverty. In 2025 alone, FEBA Members, including 25 Full Members and 5 Associate Members in 30 European countries, redistributed over 860,890 tonnes of

⁶ Eurostat, *Inflation in the Euro Area*, [Inflation in the euro area - Statistics Explained - Eurostat](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg_10_10_1)

⁷ FEBA Data Collection 2025.

⁸ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

⁹ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

food and served over 13 million people in need. Food banks redistribute food to charitable organisations and social entities that provide services including housing, education, social services and other forms of material and immaterial support. This makes food banks a vital part of Europe's social support structure, offering real solutions to address the complex issue of poverty reduction.

The EU Anti-Poverty Strategy explicitly recognises that rising prices for basic goods, including food, increase hardship and that a growing number of people rely on authorities, charities and civil society organisations, such as **food banks**, to access food, including through EU support such as European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) basic material aid. The recognition of this issue should therefore be translated into implementation of measures that treat access to food as a core component of adequate living standards and active inclusion, not only as emergency relief.¹⁰ Additionally, given the Strategy's emphasis on activation and quality employment as a key protection against poverty, FEBA stresses that access to adequate food often functions as a practical precondition for participation in training, job-search requirements and other activation pathways. In this sense, food banks contribute not only to immediate relief, but also to stabilisation and inclusion, and should be recognised as implementing partners that help connect people to services and longer-term solutions.¹¹

About 92 percent of the daily work of food banks is carried out by volunteers. This adds another crucial layer to the ability of food banks to foster social inclusion. The Algarve Food bank launched a social aid programme with the objective of strengthening social inclusion on the one hand and increasing the number of volunteers on the other. The programme involved recruiting people facing social exclusion, for instance persons with disabilities or formerly incarcerated people, accompanied by social workers, as volunteers in food banks. This allowed the volunteers to gain practical skills and education, such as farming, increasing their employability after completing the programme. In 2024, the Algarve food bank helped 11 people re-enter the job market in this way. This case study showcases the way in which food banks can contribute to social inclusion with the effect of increasing employment.

The Multiplier-effect: Creating Broader Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits

The profound impact of food banks' work can be demonstrated using the example of the multiplier effect, calculated by applying a Social Return on Investment (SROI) Methodology.¹² Several FEBA Members have carried out SROI studies in collaboration with research institutions or consultancy companies to determine their respective impacts.

In 2024, the Dutch Food Bank Federation 'Voedselbanken Nederland' partnered up with the consultancy 'Deloitte' to conduct a SROI analysis of their operations. In this case, the analysis involved mapping the different outcomes of food banks' activities and calculating the monetary value of each impact. These included benefits such as improved mental and physical health and avoided greenhouse

¹⁰ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

¹¹ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

¹² The Dutch Federation of Food Banks cooperated with the consultancy Deloitte to calculate the SROI: Vereniging van Voedselbanken Nederland and Deloitte Impact Foundation (DIF), *Wat is de sociale impact van Voedselbanken Nederland? Een Social Return on Investment analyse* (presentation, October 2024) <<https://voedselbankennederland.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/5F-20241007-Presentatie-SROI-Voedselbank.pdf>>

gas emissions from food waste. These social impacts therefore result in real cost savings. For instance, the case study identified a reduction in mental and physical health care costs, resulting from the mitigation of adverse health impacts caused by malnutrition. Thus, the identified social impacts were translated into economic benefits and compared to the total financial inputs. Based on the calculations by Deloitte and Voedselbanken Nederland, the work undertaken by Dutch food banks generated €12 in value for every €1 Euro invested.¹³

The case study proves that the impressive social returns resulting from the work of food banks translate into significant cost savings for public budgets and meaningful benefits for people in need. Food banks and the social entities they collaborate with, continue to develop innovative approaches to expand their operations. Investing in these initiatives would allow food banks to scale up innovation and increase the social impact of their efforts by reaching even more communities.

The EU Anti-Poverty Strategy underlines that the cost of non-action to combat poverty is significant and multifaceted. The above-mentioned SROI of food banks' work strengthen the case for sustained investment in material support ecosystems, particularly where food assistance is combined with accompanying measures and pathways to services.¹⁴

The Right to Food and Poverty Reduction

Under Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to food is recognised within the human right to an adequate standard of living. Additionally, Article 11(2) establishes the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. Despite its recognition as a human right under international law, the right to food is not inscribed in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Given the importance of securing access to food to address the root causes of poverty, the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy should adopt a rights-based approach that recognises the human right to access to nutritious food. Importantly, this recognition could counter the stigmatisation of most deprived persons and ensure that more people in need seek essential support. FEBA therefore strongly advocates for the adoption of a rights-based approach to securing access to food within the Strategy's implementation.

The EU Anti-Poverty Strategy frames living in dignity as a fundamental right and highlights the importance of supportive approaches that address stigma. FEBA encourages Member States to apply this dignity-based framing to the design and delivery of food and material assistance pathways, ensuring that access to adequate and healthy food is treated as integral to adequate living standards and social participation.¹⁵

In this regard, FEBA welcomes the Commission Staff Working Document on "Principles for effective anti-poverty policies", which emphasises practical conditions for effective access in real life (clear and accessible information, simplified procedures, outreach, and multi-channel access, including non-digital routes) and stresses dignity, safeguards and redress through accessible complaint and appeal

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

¹⁵ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

mechanisms. FEBA recommends that these principles be operationalised in national strategies and reflected in funding design for organisations delivering material support.¹⁶

Strengthening European Social Funding

The Strategy emphasises that reducing poverty requires sustained investments and coordinated action at all levels of governance. It also recognises growing reliance on organisations including food banks, supported in part through **ESF+ basic material assistance**. FEBA therefore stresses that safeguarding continuity, accessibility and adequacy of EU funding instruments that support access to food is essential for effective implementation, particularly as demand is sensitive to cost-of-living pressures.¹⁷

In line with the Principles for effective anti-poverty policies, FEBA underlines that funding should support “effective access” in practice (outreach, guidance, and low-threshold access routes) and should not create administrative burdens that reduce take-up or exclude people most in need. Proportionate requirements and workable co-financing conditions are particularly important for volunteer-based and community-based delivery models.¹⁸

The pivotal role of ESF+ to advance social inclusion can be illustrated when considering the work of food banks providing essential food aid and material assistance. In order to assess the beneficial effect of ESF+ on food banks within its network, FEBA carried out extensive surveys among its members. The surveys showed that with the help of ESF+, the nine FEBA Members reporting to FEBA managed about **106,300 tonnes** of ESF+ food products (approximately 11.8% of the total food received by European Food Banks), which is equivalent of over **212.6 million meals**¹⁹ (an 85% increase compared to 2024). Additionally, several FEBA Members receiving ESF+ were provided with a diverse range of non-food products and e-vouchers, alongside essential accompanying measures to support social inclusion. This allowed FEBA Members receiving ESF+ to provide support to over 5 million people in need.²⁰ The outcome of these surveys demonstrates that ESF+ funding has had a significant positive impact on the ability of food banks to continue to conduct their operations.

The priority shift at EU level towards security and defence has brought about an increasing risk of spending cuts to social initiatives. This is reflected in the Commission's proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework for the programming period 2028-2034. The resulting threat to adequate social funding is further compounded by the absence of clear thematic earmarking in the

¹⁶ European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document – Principles for Effective Anti-Poverty Policies: Supporting National, Regional and Local Authorities in Preventing and Tackling Poverty*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/926fa2cd-2f22-4161-a843-b852d4861eb5_en?filename=Commission+Staff+Working+Document+-+Principles+for+effective+anti-poverty+policies.pdf

¹⁷ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

¹⁸ European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document – Principles for Effective Anti-Poverty Policies: Supporting National, Regional and Local Authorities in Preventing and Tackling Poverty*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/926fa2cd-2f22-4161-a843-b852d4861eb5_en?filename=Commission+Staff+Working+Document+-+Principles+for+effective+anti-poverty+policies.pdf

¹⁹ Meals are estimated by converting total tonnes of food into kilograms and dividing by an average meal weight of 0.5 kg, meaning 1 kg of food corresponds to 2 meals.

²⁰ FEBA ESF+ data collection (9 out of 10 FEBA members) - to update

new framework. Under the current ESF+ Regulation for 2021-2027, Member States are required to allocate at least 25% of resources to social inclusion, a minimum of 3% to food aid and basic material assistance for the most deprived, and, where relevant, 5% to tackling child poverty. By contrast, the new Draft Proposal establishing the National and Regional Partnership Plans contains no equivalent binding earmarking for social inclusion, material deprivation, food aid, or other specific anti-poverty objectives. In order to successfully implement the Anti-Poverty Strategy and achieve the objectives set out by the EPSR Action Plan, the EU must provide dedicated, stable EU funding. Furthermore, FEBA believes that a dedicated percentage of 10% is safeguarded for material support and food aid specifically. Increasing the earmarking to 10% would not only respond to the sustained rise in food inflation and the growing demand for assistance but would also meaningfully influence national allocation choices. Without the support of adequate and consistent resources, food banks and other civil society organisations cannot continue to provide material support and carry out services to support the most deprived persons out of poverty.

The adopted EU Anti-Poverty Strategy recognises that delivering results in reducing poverty requires immediate and sustainable investments, and it acknowledges growing reliance on organisations including food banks, supported also through ESF+ basic material assistance. FEBA considers this reinforces the case for protecting the operational capacity of material support delivery and ensuring that funding rules and administrative requirements do not undermine effective access for the most vulnerable people.²¹

Engagement of Civil Society

The new Anti-Poverty Strategy will only be effective if civil society organisations and people with lived experiences of poverty are involved in policy making and implementation. This contribution has described the crucial role that food banks play in this regard. Just as the revised Waste Framework Directive recognises food banks as vital actors to be consulted on food waste reduction measures, the Anti-Poverty Strategy should recognise their essential function for the alleviation of poverty.

The Strategy must put mechanisms in place that safeguard the participation of civil society. To adequately support the work of civil society organisations and secure their engagement, EU funding opportunities must be more accessible. This will require clarification of co-financing rules and the reduction of the administrative burden placed on civil society organisations.

Additionally, to translate the broader Strategy in the form of an overarching framework into practical guidance for Member States, it should facilitate the sharing of best practices and peer learning between governmental bodies and social actors, including food banks and other organisations providing material support.

²¹ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

European Commission, *Communication on Breaking the cycle of child poverty - strengthening the European Child Guarantee*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=cellar:e7c7d57f-49fe-11f1-8095-01aa75ed71a1

The adopted EU Anti-Poverty Strategy explicitly states that success depends on the engagement of civil society and on the involvement of people experiencing poverty. It also announces a **structured dialogue with persons experiencing poverty** and calls on Member States to appoint an **Anti-Poverty Coordinator** at the highest political level to coordinate the development, implementation and monitoring of anti-poverty frameworks. FEBA welcomes these measures and calls for Member States to ensure that civil society organisations delivering material support, such as food banks, are structurally included in governance arrangements and implementation planning.²²

FEBA also supports the approach set out in the “Principles for effective anti-poverty policies”, including the use of professionals with lived experience of poverty (peer workers/community mediators) to strengthen outreach, trust and effective access to rights, and encourages Member States to resource and operationalise such roles in partnership with civil society actors.²³

Adopting a Cross-Sectoral approach

Furthermore, the Strategy must adopt a cross-sectoral approach that reflects the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Regarding food aid specifically, the Strategy must reflect its interconnection with wider policy areas, including health, employment, education and the environment. It must therefore be embedded within broader strategies that address systemic inequalities and social inclusion, as well as those outside of the social remit.

The adopted EU Anti-Poverty Strategy reinforces this cross-sectoral rationale through its life cycle and active inclusion approach. FEBA further notes that the Strategy identifies key services for children and explicitly refers to **school meals and healthy nutrition**, underscoring that food-related measures are preventive as well as protective and enabling across the life course.²⁴

Ensuring Broader Supporting Measures

To address the many factors causing social inequality and poverty, the Strategy must protect and strengthen social protection schemes, including minimum income and pensions, and ensure that these are adjusted to inflation and the increasing costs of living. Given that measures aimed at the reduction of poverty are often implemented at local and regional level, the Strategy should particularly support cooperation at these governance levels. Food banks are exemplary of this effective collaboration, involving governmental bodies, social entities and private actors that work to realise access to food aid at local and regional level.

The adopted Strategy emphasises that inflation and rising prices increase hardship and that prevention and protection are both urgent. FEBA therefore reiterates that supporting measures should be

²² European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

²³ European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document – Principles for Effective Anti-Poverty Policies: Supporting National, Regional and Local Authorities in Preventing and Tackling Poverty*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/926fa2cd-2f22-4161-a843-b852d4861eb5_en?filename=Commission+Staff+Working+Document+-+Principles+for+effective+anti-poverty+policies.pdf

²⁴ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

designed for early intervention and real-life accessibility and reducing administrative barriers that can prevent eligible people from receiving timely support.²⁵

FEBA also welcomes the “Principles for effective anti-poverty policies” emphasis on dignity, safeguards, redress, and the prevention of intrusive or punitive administrative practices. FEBA recommends that these safeguards be incorporated across anti-poverty delivery chains, including where material support and food assistance intersect with social services and conditionality frameworks.²⁶

Monitoring

To ensure Member States' stringent compliance with the Strategy, it must set out a robust monitoring mechanism. At EU level, the main indicator measuring the share of people at risk of poverty or at risk of being severely materially and socially deprived is the At Risk Of Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE) rate. Food security only serves as one of the indicators monitored to measure the share of people that are severely materially deprived. As a result, food insecurity is not ascribed enough weight in the monitoring process.

FEBA is working closely with its members in order to develop a Unified Data Framework, which aims to improve the accuracy and consistency of data collection across the network on the social and environmental impact of food banks' activities. Due to the unique insights that food banks can provide on the effects of their work on beneficiaries, this data could allow for more robust monitoring and more effective evaluations of anti-poverty and social inclusion measures.

The adopted EU Anti-Poverty Strategy includes initiatives to strengthen governance and improve monitoring, including the development of **new poverty indicators in 2028** and the establishment of a **structured dialogue with persons experiencing poverty**. FEBA welcomes these initiatives and calls for indicator development to better capture food insecurity and material deprivation and to reflect real-life barriers to access, including non-take-up and administrative exclusion.²⁷

In addition to outcome indicators, FEBA recommends monitoring the quality of access pathways, consistent with the “Principles for effective anti-poverty policies”, including clarity of information, administrative burden, timeliness, availability of non-digital routes and user feedback. This would help ensure that rights and services are accessible in practice for people experiencing poverty.²⁸

²⁵ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

²⁶ European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document – Principles for Effective Anti-Poverty Policies: Supporting National, Regional and Local Authorities in Preventing and Tackling Poverty*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/926fa2cd-2f22-4161-a843-b852d4861eb5_en?filename=Commission+Staff+Working+Document+-+Principles+for+effective+anti-poverty+policies.pdf

²⁷ European Commission, *EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/eu-anti-poverty-strategy_en

²⁸ European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document – Principles for Effective Anti-Poverty Policies: Supporting National, Regional and Local Authorities in Preventing and Tackling Poverty*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/926fa2cd-2f22-4161-a843-b852d4861eb5_en?filename=Commission+Staff+Working+Document+-+Principles+for+effective+anti-poverty+policies.pdf

Overview of Policy Recommendations

1. Adopting a human rights-based approach to food aid and material support
2. Providing essential resources: strengthening EU funding for material support
3. Support for civil society
4. Adopting a cross-sectoral approach: mainstreaming food security issues
5. Ensuring supporting measures
6. Regular and robust monitoring

To reflect the adopted EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and its implementation tools, FEBA further specifies that: access to adequate and healthy food should be treated as integral to adequate living standards and living in dignity; food banks should be recognised as implementing partners in active inclusion pathways; funding and service design should prioritise effective access in practice; and monitoring should more directly capture food insecurity and material deprivation, including through the planned development of new poverty indicators.²⁹

Conclusion

FEBA welcomes the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and supports its emphasis on dignity, effective access to essential goods and services, tackling stigma, multi-level coordination, and the involvement of people experiencing poverty. FEBA also welcomes the Strategy's governance and delivery initiatives, including the **Principles for effective anti-poverty policies**, the call for national **Anti-Poverty Coordinators**, the planned **structured dialogue** with persons experiencing poverty, and work towards **new poverty indicators**.³⁰

The Strategy recognises that rising food prices have increased hardship and that more people rely on organisations including food banks, supported in part through ESF+ basic material assistance. FEBA calls for this recognition to be translated into concrete implementation priorities, monitoring and resourcing decisions, ensuring that access to adequate and healthy food is explicitly addressed as part of living in dignity and as a practical enabler of activation, inclusion and resilience.³¹ FEBA stands ready to contribute to implementation through structured dialogue, cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, and evidence-building on material deprivation and effective access. FEBA invites EU institutions and Member States to recognise and support food banks as long-term partners in social inclusion policy delivery, complementing prevention and protection measures to ensure that no one is left behind.

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²⁹ European Commission, *EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/eu-anti-poverty-strategy_en

³⁰ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

³¹ European Commission, *Communication on an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy*, Brussels, 6 May 2026, available at: https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ec5447e3-9f62-4c6b-b53b-af7dad8524eb_en?filename=EC-anti-poverty_proposal_2026.pdf

