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## BREAKFAST MEETING

# Do Good: Save Food! Educating future generations for a zero food waste world

## Event Summary Report 21 February 2019 - European Parliament



According to FAO, each year about 1.3 billion tons of food produced are either lost or wasted. Food waste predominantly occurs at consumption level and is often related to the functioning of the food supply chain and decisions made by actors including industry and consumers. Food safety standards laid down in policy and regulatory frameworks may also lead to food being removed from the supply chain in order to protect human and animal health. Food waste has a high social, economic and environmental cost, but also ethical consequences as 821 million people are chronically undernourished. At the EU level, food waste prevention has been identified as a priority area in the Circular Economy Action Plan published in December 2015 by the European Commission. In May 2018, revised EU waste legislation was adopted, introducing new measures for food waste prevention, requiring Member States to adopt national food waste prevention programmes, reduce food waste generation at each stage of the food supply chain, monitor and report annually on food waste levels. To support these efforts, the Commission will soon adopt, through a Delegated Act, a new methodology to measure food waste consistently at each phase of the food supply chain, according to the food waste definition laid down in the revised Waste Framework Directive. The new waste legislation also calls on the Commission to consider the feasibility of establishing a Union-wide food waste reduction target, to be met by 2030, following examination of future data on food waste levels to be received from Member States. . In order to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 12 “Responsible consumption and production” and the related Target 12.3 to halve global per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030, and reduce food losses along the food production and supply chains, cross-cutting policy responses and the involvement and action by all stakeholders are needed, including consumers. The event discussed policies and focused on young people and their actions against food waste, the role of education in this regard, and presented the FAO educational package on food waste, asking the participants to take action.



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The panel included:

- **Biljana Borzan**, MEP
- **Angelique Delahaye**, MEP
- **Rodrigo de Lapuerta**, Director FAO Liaison office with the European Union and Belgium
- **Rosa Rolle**, Senior Enterprise Development officer, FAO
- **Anne-Laure Gassin**, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (SANTE), European Commission
- **Philippe Micheaux-Naudet**, Deputy Secretary General, ACR+
- **Todor Ivanov**, Secretary General, Eurocoop
- **Thomas Candeal**, Project Manager, International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC)
- **Lorenzo Ferrucci**, Food and Drinks Europe
- **Hélène Delabye**, Retail Quality & Sustainable Development Manager, Carrefour Belgium
- **Oksana Sapiga**, Communication and Partnership Consultant, FAO
- **Eva De Baerdemaeker**, Cultureghem

In her opening speech, **MEP Biljana Borzan** stressed that reducing food waste is a political and moral responsibility incumbent on the European Union as a whole. Measures need to be taken to reduce and eliminate the socio-economic and environmental impacts. 88 million tons of food waste are generated per year in the European Union alone. The production and disposal of EU food waste leads to the emission of 170 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and consumes 261 million tons of resources. The European Parliament's own initiative report on "Initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety" emphasized the role of education in the fight against food waste. Member states should encourage food courses at every level of education. The European Court of Auditors' report "Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain" states that, in their strategies for the school milk, fruit and vegetable schemes, only 10 Member States provide for accompanying educational measures. In fact, Croatia is the only one to contain a reference to educational activity, which contributes towards the prevention of food waste. MEP Borzan also addressed the EU Directive on Waste adopted in 2018, within which Member States are called to introduce mandatory measures to reduce food waste along the entire agri-food chain and to work towards achieving the SDG 12.3 objective to halve food waste by 2030.

**MEP Angelique Delahaye**, in her speech, expressed that the fight against food waste is essential for the future of our planet. The EU is actively in need of an effective methodology to measure food waste and food loss. The EU's common agricultural policy (CAP) negotiations, have managed to put the fight against food waste high on the European Parliament's agenda. Nevertheless, legislation alone is not enough; relevant stakeholders also need to gather to discuss the matter and take action. "Changing mentalities is essential", Ms. Delahaye underlined, moreover mentioning her experience as chairperson of SOLAAL, a charity that organizes donations directly from the farmers to food aid associations, with the aim of giving fresh products to the most deprived people. This association also works with children and young people to raise awareness about food waste..

**Rodrigo de Lapuerta**, Director of the FAO Liaison office with the European Union and Belgium, mentioned during his introductory speech that food is wasted in many ways and in many places; particularly in developed countries. Mr. de Lapuerta mentioned as an example the fresh products, that deviate from what is considered perfect in terms of shape, size and color, and are therefore often removed from the supply chain during sorting operations. Moreover, foods that are close to-, at- or beyond- the best-before date are often discarded by retailers and by consumers. Food waste,



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he stressed, has significant social, economic and environmental costs. And more than everything, food waste is ethically unacceptable. He highlighted the key role children and young people can play as the consumers, citizens and decision-makers of the future. FAO believes that investing in their education will vastly help in creating a culture of change in view of addressing the problem of food waste. This is precisely the rationale behind and the focus of the educational material package “Do Good Save Food!”, produced by FAO in collaboration with the International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC), and presented during this event.

Furthermore, **Rosa Rolle**, FAO Senior Enterprise Development Officer stressed that the world currently has the capacity to produce enough food so that every person on Earth can benefit from a nutritious diet. With a growing population, increasing urbanization, climate change, the stagnation of land resources for food production and the increasing scarcity of water resources, our world today is facing a critical challenge to ensure that the nearly 10 billion people living on this planet in 2050 will have access to sufficient supplies of safe and nutritious food. Sustainably feeding and nourishing the global population in the future will necessitate a combination of many solutions. Towards this direction, wasting less food to feed more people in an equitable, healthy and safe way, represents an opportunity of significant magnitude. “Wasting food represents a waste of nutrients, and has huge local and global environmental impacts as well. Aside from the environmental price associated with food waste, there is also an enormous financial cost to this wasteful behavior”. By preventing food loss and waste, we can save nutritious food for re-distribution to those in need, avoid pressure on scarce natural resources, help mitigate climate change, and save money for farmers, companies and households. As a result, FAO believes that investing in educating the younger generation on this matter will contribute significantly to achieving food waste prevention and reduction.

During her intervention, **Anne-Laure Gassin** from DG SANTE, reiterated the EU’s commitment to being a driving force in the global fight against food loss and waste with SDG 12.3 as our target. The European Commission’s Reflection Paper, “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”, underlines the importance of pursuing the EU action plan to fight food waste in order to strengthen the sustainability of our food systems. Fighting food waste can also have positive impact on other Sustainable Development Goals, for example climate action (SDG 13). “If food waste were a country, it would be the third biggest greenhouse gas emitter after China and the United States”, she said. . In her presentation, Ms. Gassin explained that over 50% of EU food waste is generated at household level, and that everyone is therefore concerned about it. The role of education is of key importance to change behaviour and adopt new habits. Regarding the work of the Commission, an EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste was established in 2016, bringing together all the relevant actors from public and private sectors in order to help catalyse the EU’s progress towards SDG Target 12.3.. The Platform has helped the Commission make important progress in implementing food waste prevention actions, including guidelines to facilitate food donation and the feed use of food no longer intended for human consumption, the development of food waste measurement methodology and the improvement of date marking practices. In March 2019, a common EU measurement methodology will be released and the first EU-wide reporting of food waste levels in Member States is expected in 2022. Date marking (ie “use by” and “best before” dates on food labelling) is a key issue because inconsistent use and misunderstanding of the meaning of these dates can generate food waste all along the food supply chain. “In the fight against food waste it all comes down to action, by each and every one of us” she said. The Platform also plays a key role in facilitating the sharing of best practices, experience, business cases and models. At the end of her intervention, Ms. Gassin stressed the importance of research and innovation in the fight against food waste and EU support in this regard. More information on EU action to fight food waste can be found [here](#).



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**Philippe Micheaux-Naudet**, described ACR+ as an international network of cities and regions promoting a sustainable resource and waste management, and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy on their territories and beyond. He emphasized the need for collaboration between stakeholders of private and public sectors. He gave examples of initiatives from Belgium and Portugal combining food labelling with the “doggie” bag concept. More information about these two initiatives can be found on these two websites: [www.goodfood.brussels](http://www.goodfood.brussels) and [www.lipor.pt](http://www.lipor.pt). ACR+ also supports educational programs in schools to generate change regarding food consumption. In Italy, Belgium, the UK and France, students have learned about food waste and are now teachers themselves to the younger generation. Mr Micheaux-Naudet ended his speech by talking about the European Week for Waste Reduction in administrations, NGOs, schools and companies. A new edition will be out in November 2019, and more information can be found [here](#).

**Todor Ivanov**, Eurocoop Secretary General, opened his speech stating that “food waste is an international catastrophe and not a problem”. Eurocoop is a European association of consumer co-operatives involving national associations & individual consumer co-operatives, promoting sustainable production all along the food supply chain. Some of the key principles of Eurocoop are: education, training and information, as tools to prevent food waste. Mr. Ivanov presented a panel of creative examples from all over Europe, further information on these examples can be found within his [presentation](#).

Working towards reducing food waste within the food services especially in mass catering, **Thomas Candéal** from International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC), mentioned that the repartition of the food waste generated by mass catering is not homogenous and depends on the location and type of food produced. He stated that globally 70-80% of the food wasted is still consumable, and food services are only responsible for 12% of the global share in food waste. But acting on the mass catering level means you work with all the value chain and directly with the consumers. In order to act efficiently there is a need to tackle the lack of data on the subject. To achieve complete food waste reduction, collaboration between all stakeholders needs to take place all along the supply chain.

During his presentation, **Lorenzo Ferrucci**, explained the importance of avoiding food waste. He highlighted that losing resources in manufacturing means losing production value and wasting food means wasting resources. The increasing global demand for food implies that the food system needs to be managed in a sustainable and efficient way. FoodDrinkEurope has been very active on the subject since 2013. In 2013 it launched «Every Crumb Counts Declaration», a food supply chain initiative to tackle food wastage supported by UN Environment and FAO. FoodDrinkEurope and its members are committed to promote sustainable practices and implement the targets set within the SDGs, strengthening the links between food, people and the planet. As a result, in 2018 the organization created a Sustainable Development Goals [website](#).

**Hélène Delabye**, from Carrefour Belgium, is very active in the fight against waste in all areas. For the company, the food is precious and its value should be respected. Carrefour has resorted to many different ways of dealing with food waste. For food that is still edible, Carrefour is collaborating with the Food Banks & local associations set up to tackle poverty; [this](#) is one of many solutions. For the food that cannot be sold nor given away, it is recycled as pet food or transformed to energy. The main goal remains to recycle all waste ultimately. In an attempt to limit food waste, it was also mentioned that the Belgian law also allows companies to remove the date from some products like candy, sugar, vinegar or salt. Ms. Delabye added that every type of “waste” has its destination and prevention is of key importance.



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**Rosa Rolle** from FAO presented the Educational Package on Food Waste Reduction “*Do Good, Save Food!*” targeted to primary and secondary schools and developed collaboratively by FAO and the International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC). The educational material can be accessed online in [English](#), and will be soon also made available in French. The teaching guides target four different age groups: 5-7 years, 8-9 years, 10-13 years, and from 14 years and above. Ms. Rolle explained that all the guides are similarly structured and include two core lessons, the first being more information and knowledge-oriented focusing on the causes and consequences of food waste, and the second having a more hands-on approach and highlighting concrete actions students can take to reduce food waste. Follow-on activities which aim to deepen the understanding of key issues are also part of the teaching material and include discussions, games, worksheets, drama activities according to the age group. The aim of the educational material is to “transform the behavior of children and young adults from being food wasters to food savers and then advocates for food waste reduction” as concluded by Ms Rolle.

In her presentation, **Oksana Sapiga** from FAO, focused on the dissemination strategy of the educational material as part of the Save Food Initiative on Food Waste Reduction in Europe and Central Asia. She highlighted the importance of taking national contexts into consideration and adapting the educational material to these. Beyond the teaching guides, the materials produced by the IFWC can be used to plan and monitor the implementation of the food waste reduction project in kitchens and school canteens, with the aim of reducing food waste at the pre-consumption level as well. “15-50% food waste reduction can be achieved depending on the extent to which the programme is implemented”, highlighted Ms. Sapiga, “these figures are based on the pilot scheme that was carried out in France, Belgium, Italy and the UK in 2015-2017”. Currently the aim is to implement the programme in at least two EU and two non-EU countries by the end of 2020, and in 50 different schools. The process has already started in Hungary and Turkey. The translation into Croatian has also begun under the initiative and support of MEP Borzan.

**Eva De Baerdemaeker**, on behalf of Cultureghem, talked about the work the association is doing regarding food waste prevention and management. This organization uses the Brussels slaughter houses as an open market in their closing days. This citizens’ initiative collects unsold fruit and vegetables and shares it with others. They created an educational program “KOOKMET RECUP”, a bottom-up initiative, aimed at educating kids and adults on food waste through the cooking of unsold ingredients. This activity is educational, but also social, as it brings people from different backgrounds together. She ended her speech by emphasizing the need to act together with the present knowledge to prevent food waste in the future.

In her closing speech, **MEP Bijana Borzan**, stated that fighting food loss and waste is an important global effort in which the EU can, and should, take part. Particularly in industrialized countries, changes in consumer behavior can have a significant impact on the amount of food wasted. “During my childhood, my grandparents were horrified if old bread or other edible food was thrown away. Our and newer generations thankfully never experienced famine, but, partly because of that, we lost the sense for the value of food” she said. Education therefore, is a central aspect of fighting waste; getting students and children involved in reducing food loss and waste is a necessity. Last but not least, she welcomed the work done by FAO with the educational materials describing it as excellent and fit for purpose.

Last but not least, **MEP Angelique Delahaye** mentioned within her closing speech the importance of being hopeful for the future. Society and policy makers are now aware of the food waste matter. In the past, respecting and consuming food in a responsible way was transmitted from generation to



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generation. The present loss of food value was caused by the modern agricultural systems based on producing cheap food, as stressed by the MEP. Nevertheless, many people in Europe can't yet afford to eat every day. It is therefore our responsibility to change this paradigm by using the tools provided, in a circular economy system.