



European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste

Final Report

#FoodWasteEU

Manuscript completed in July 2023

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1. Introduction

The European Commission organised three European citizens' panels in 2023, one of which was on the topic of food waste. Each of the panels brought together up to 150 randomly selected citizens from all 27 EU Member States to deliberate and make recommendations ahead of key Commission proposals. The panels deliver on the commitment expressed by the Communication of 17 June 2022 'Conference on the future of Europe: putting vision into concrete action'⁽¹⁾ and by President von der Leyen during the 2022 State of the Union address. The European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste was the first European citizens' panel, with three sessions held on 16–18 December 2022, 20–22 January 2023 and 10–12 February 2023.

Food waste reduction must happen at a greater scale and pace if the EU and its Member States are to deliver on their commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)⁽²⁾. This is crucial not only in the face of a growing world population and the challenges this poses to food security, but also to mitigate the environmental and climate impacts of our food system. Recognising the importance of reducing food waste in Europe, the EU has integrated this goal in its 2020 Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. In line with this strategy, the Commission adopted, on 5 July 2023, a legislative proposal⁽³⁾ setting legally binding food waste reduction targets to be met by the Member States by the end of 2030. These will invite all EU Member States to take ambitious action towards the reduction of food waste in their respective territories.

As households account for over half of the food waste generated in the EU, citizens can be essential actors in tackling the issue. Taking action to reduce food waste is necessary at all levels of the food supply chain – from primary production and manufacturing of food products to retail, food services and consumption – but the high amounts generated at the consumption level highlight the relevance of citizens' insights and recommendations. In this context, the participants in this first European citizens' panel were invited to create a list of recommendations on how to step up action to reduce food waste in the EU. These recommendations would then feed into the Commission's overall work programme related to food waste prevention and be considered in the preparation of the upcoming legislative proposal. The panel's recommendations are also expected to serve as a guide to help EU Member States in achieving the food waste reduction targets, set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive, by 2030.

The panel sounded the views of citizens on actions that should be taken by EU Member States, actors in the food supply chain, citizens and other private and public stakeholders in order to accelerate food waste reduction and achieve the targets to be set at the EU level. Based on information materials, expert inputs, and working group and plenary debates, participants in the European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste identified and prioritised issues relevant for the Commission's new policy proposal. The inputs and outputs of the panel are summarised in this report, including its annex. This report summarises the main features of the European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste, and lays out its methodological framework, the way debates were facilitated, the outputs of the three sessions and the next steps.

⁽¹⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Conference on the Future of Europe: Putting vision into concrete action, COM(2022)404 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0404>).

⁽²⁾ SDG Target 12.3 calls for halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels by 2030, and the reduction of food losses along the food supply chain.

⁽³⁾ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste, COM(2023)420 final (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/Proposal%20for%20a%20DIRECTIVE%20OF%20THE%20EUROPEAN%20PARLIAMENT%20AND%20OF%20THE%20COUNCIL%20amending%20Directive%20200898EC%20on%20waste%20COM_2023_420.pdf).



10/02/23 - 16:00

Topic block 1: INNOVATION IN THE FOOD CHAIN, FROM FARM TO FORK

Topic block 2: FOOD BUSINESS INITIATIVES

Topic block 3: SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS

Alcide de Gasperi room (Groups 1-4)

Jenkins room (Groups 5-8)

Sholt room (Groups 9-12)



European Citizens Panel
food waste
Have Your Say

2. Main features of the European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste

2.1. RANDOM SELECTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL

The participants in the citizens' panel were recruited through random selection, as this is a fair, consistent and reliable approach for selecting individuals for such participatory processes. Properly applied random selection can increase diversity and representativeness. Recruitment was carried out by Kantar Public with the support of 27 national recruitment agencies. In most countries, participants were recruited by telephone (computer-assisted telephone interviewing), using random-digit dialling. In some other countries, however, face-to-face methods (computer-assisted personal interviewing) or random selection from a probabilistic online panel (only Luxembourg) were used. The average acceptance rate across the EU was 4.5 %, with variation between countries.

Table 1 provides an overview of the desired number of citizen panellists across EU Member States (country quotas), as well as the actual number of participants per session for each country. The aim was to reach a level of representation of EU Member States that is proportional to the size of their population, balanced by a minimum of two citizens per country ⁽⁴⁾. In other words, high targets were set for countries with a large population, such as Germany (19 citizens), while two citizens from each of Luxembourg and Malta were invited. In general, there was a good level of attendance, which broadly reflected the set targets. For 23 out of the 27 EU Member States, the participation targets were achieved. Overall, out of the 150 targeted participants, 148 citizens took part in at least one of the sessions.

⁽⁴⁾ The country quotas were generated using a degressive proportionality system, which is also employed to calculate the number of seats per Member State in the European Parliament.

Table 1: Panel participants per Member State

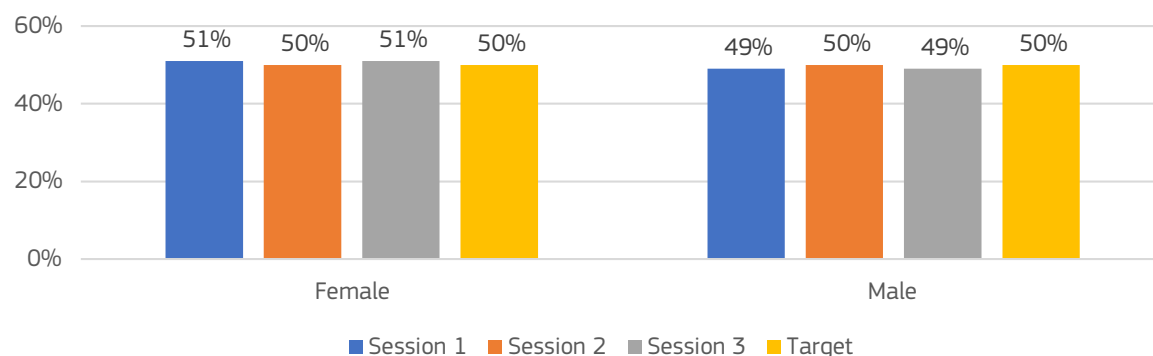
COUNTRY	TARGET PARTICIPANTS	ACTUAL PARTICIPANTS		
		Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Belgium	5	4	5	4
Bulgaria	4	4	4	4
Czechia	5	5	5	5
Denmark	3	3	3	3
Germany	19	17	18	16
Estonia	2	2	2	2
Ireland	3	3	3	3
Greece	5	5	5	5
Spain	12	12	13	13
France	15	16	16	16
Croatia	2	2	2	2
Italy	15	13	13	12
Cyprus	2	2	2	2
Latvia	2	2	2	2
Lithuania	2	2	2	2
Luxembourg	2	2	2	2
Hungary	5	2	2	2
Malta	2	2	2	2
Netherlands	6	6	6	6
Austria	4	4	4	4
Poland	10	10	12	11
Portugal	5	5	5	5
Romania	7	7	7	7
Slovenia	2	2	2	2
Slovakia	3	3	3	3
Finland	3	3	3	3
Sweden	5	4	4	4
TOTAL	150	142	147	142

To ensure that the panel reflected the diversity of the EU population to the best possible extent, target quotas for participants were defined according to the sociodemographic characteristics presented in Figure 1 (the actual shares of participants refer to the

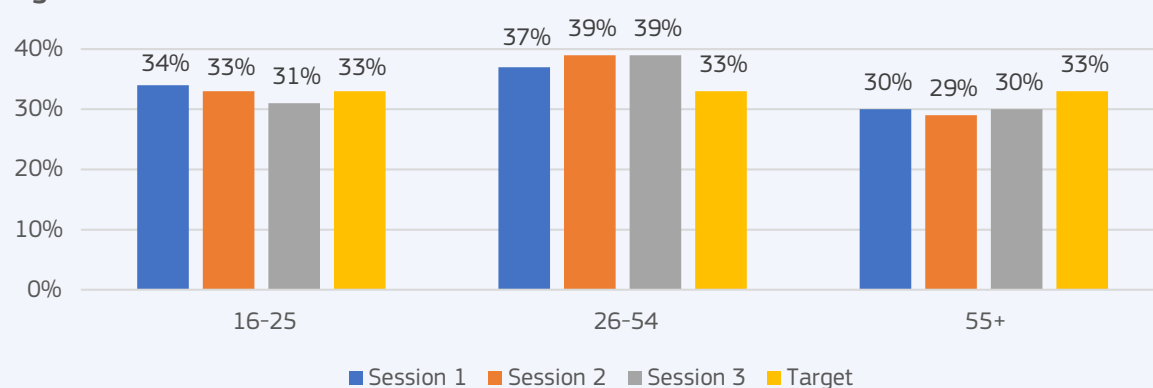
148 citizens who attended at least one of the sessions). One exception was the choice to overrepresent youth by recruiting a third of the panel from the 16–25 age group even though this group represents less than 33 % of the European population ⁽⁵⁾.

Figure 1: Distributions of participants by gender, age, residence and education level

Gender distribution across sessions

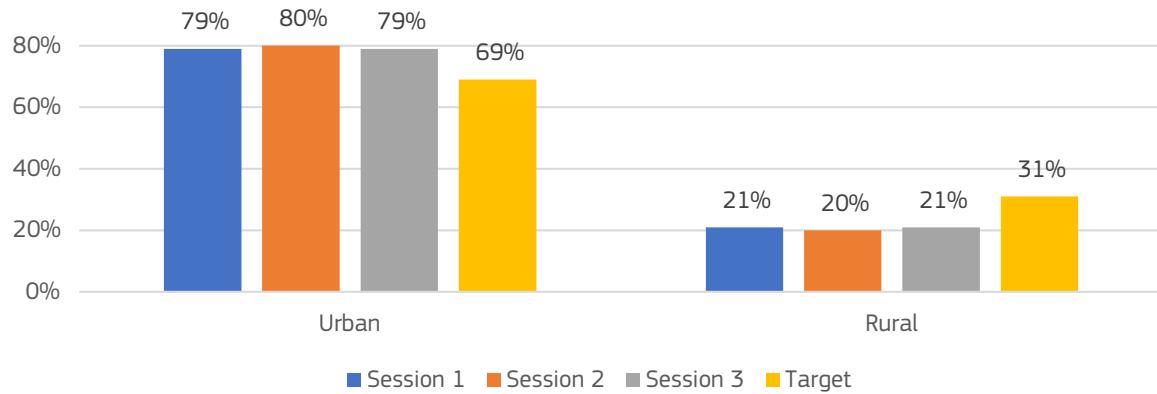


Age distribution across sessions

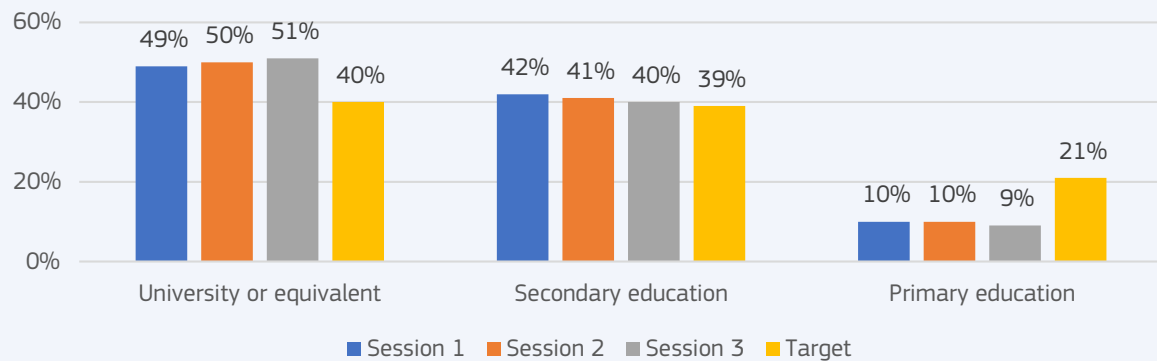


⁽⁵⁾ According to Eurostat data for 2022 (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/TPS00010/default/table?lang=en&category=demo.demo_ind), this age group represents 10.6 % of the EU population.

Distribution of participants according to their residence



Distribution of participants according to their level of education



2.2. STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee designed, organised and conducted the European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste. It met once a week to decide on conceptual and organisational matters, including methodology-, logistics- and budget-related questions. The committee was composed of representatives of the European Commission and contractors. On the side of the European Commission, two directorates-general (DGs) contributed to the work of the Steering Committee: DG Health and Food Safety, responsible for food-waste-related initiatives including the preparation of the legislative proposal setting food waste reduction targets to be achieved by Member States, and DG Communication, in charge of the new phase of citizen engagement and in particular responsible for the methodology and organisation of the European citizens' panels.

The contractors worked together to design and implement this new generation of European citizens' panels. The recruitment of citizens was conducted by Kantar Public. VO Europe and MCI were responsible for citizens' communication and assistance as well as

for all organisational aspects of the three sessions. In addition, an international Deliberation Team composed of ifok (Germany), Missions Publiques (France), the Danish Board of Technology Foundation (Denmark) and deliberativa (Spain) brought together experts to design and facilitate the deliberative process. The Deliberation Team partners pooled their know-how to conceptualise the overall participatory process and the methodology for each session, together with DG Communication. The Deliberation Team was responsible for drafting a concept note, for outlining the panel's remit together with DG Health and Food Safety and DG Communication, and for setting up an advisory Knowledge Committee. Moreover, with the support of DG Health and Food Safety and the Knowledge Committee, it recruited and briefed speakers who helped citizens understand the issue in all its complexity and addressed citizens' queries during the three sessions. It also coordinated the communication with citizens as well as the support team on site, conducted the main moderation and the group work facilitation, and oversaw the reporting on the results.





2.3. KNOWLEDGE COMMITTEE

The involvement of a Knowledge Committee composed of experts in the field of food waste prevention enhanced the integrity of the deliberative process by guaranteeing the quality, objectivity, diversity and comprehensibility of the information provided to citizens. The Knowledge Committee's role was to produce and provide knowledge and expertise to create a level playing field for all participants and facilitate discussions among them. This was done through the drafting of an information kit distributed to citizens prior to the first session, among other activities. The factual policy input was developed in close collaboration with the Steering Committee.

The Knowledge Committee also helped the Deliberation Team to identify signs of weakness (e.g. absence of debate) and blind spots within citizens' deliberations (e.g. possible overlaps between ideas and existing EU initiatives and/or areas where proposed action was not necessarily supported by evidence). The committee also engaged in fact-checking and answered citizens' questions during and after the sessions, supported by a Knowledge and Information Centre (KIC), which involved other experts from the Commission. Furthermore, it supported the Deliberation Team in its effort to gather citizens' outputs into main categories of action, informed by their knowledge and experience with food waste prevention.

The Knowledge Committee was composed of five members selected by the Steering Committee, based on the following criteria: expertise covering a wide variety of knowledge fields; broad recognition, among both stakeholders and peers, of the individual's know-how and experience in the field; the ability to understand, acknowledge and communicate diverse views on the topic, including possible trade-offs; and diversity in terms of gender, nationality and affiliations. In addition, a representative of DG Health and Food Safety provided EU policy insights.

The members of the Knowledge Committee were:

- Laura Fernández Celemín, European Food Information Council;
- Betty Chang, European Food Information Council;
- Anne-Laure Gassin, DG Health and Food Safety;
- Gyula Kasza, University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest;
- Maïwenn L'Hoir, Ministry of Agriculture, Agrifood and Forestry, France;
- Toine Timmermans, Wageningen University & Research, the Netherlands.

2.4. KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION CENTRE

A Knowledge and Information Centre (KIC) was set up to reply to questions and requests for clarification sent by citizens throughout their deliberations. The KIC included experts from DG Communication and DG Health and Food Safety and experts from other DGs of the Commission, who were asked to provide responses on their respective policy areas, as well as members

of the Knowledge Committee. Throughout the three sessions of the European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste, the KIC provided written answers to over 100 questions raised by citizens. In the third session, KIC members made short interventions in the 12 working groups to clarify any remaining issues before citizens formulated their final recommendations.

2.5. SPEAKERS

In addition to the members of the Knowledge Committee, several stakeholders and experts were invited to present different positions and experiences as regards food waste reduction, and to answer citizens' questions. The speakers presented examples of effective actions to reduce food waste and laid out which actors need to be involved. They provided information about the impacts of food waste reduction measures on the environment, the economy and society. They also debated the importance of engaging

multiple players to achieve change, and the precautions to be taken to minimise possible negative effects (e.g. food waste prevention should not undermine food safety). The Knowledge Committee made sure that the information presented to citizens was balanced, adequate and sufficiently representative of the main positions of policymakers and stakeholders in the EU. Table 2 lists the speakers who took the floor during the sessions.



Table 2: Speakers

SESSION 1	
Welcoming remarks	Dubravka Šuica , Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, European Commission
	Stella Kyriakides , Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, European Commission
	Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen , Director-General, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission
European Commission experts	Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul , Deputy Head of Unit, Citizens ' Dialogues, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission
	Anne-Laure Gassin , Team Leader, Farm to Fork Strategy Unit, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission
External experts and practitioners	Toine Timmermans , Program Manager Sustainable Food Chains at Wageningen University
	Victor De Meester , Environmental Coordinator at Colruyt Group
	Betty Chang , Research Area Lead at European Food Information Council
	Thomas Candéal , Project Manager at the International Food Waste Coalition
	Maïwenn L 'Hoir , Project Manager for the fight against food waste and food insecurity - sustainable food, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, France
	Gyula Kasza , Coordinator of Maradék Nélkül (Project Wasteless), the national food waste prevention programme of Hungary; Associate Professor at University of Veterinary Medicine Hungary
	Bruno Menne , Senior Policy Advisor for food safety, consumer information, animal nutrition and feed, quality insurance at COPA COGECA
	Angela Frigo , Secretary General at European Food Banks Federation
Farewell remarks	Richard Kühnel , Director, Representation & Communication in Member States, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission
SESSION 2	
Welcoming remarks	Anne-Laure Gassin , Team Leader, Farm to Fork Strategy Unit, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission
Topic block I: "Cooperation in the food value chain: From farm to fork"	Toine Timmermans , Program Manager Sustainable Food Chains at Wageningen University
	Dorothee Briaumont , Executive Director, SOLAAL
	Francisca Feiteira , Food Policy Officer, Slow Food
	Fabien Santini , Deputy Head of Unit - Governance of agri-food markets, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission
Topic block II: "Food business initiatives"	Ahmed Soliman , Quality in Design Director, Danone
	Marine Thizon , Public Affairs Manager, HOTREC
	Fabrizio Fabbri , Food & Sustainability Manager, Euro Coop
	Eduardo Montero Mansilla , Food Officer, La Federación de Consumidores y Usuarios CECU
Topic block III: "Supporting consumer behavioural change"	Erica van Herpen , Associate Professor in the Marketing and Consumer Behavior Group, Wageningen University
	Odile Le Bolloch , Environmental Scientist, Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland
	João Toledo , National Expert in Agrifood Production Organization, Ministry of Agriculture, Portugal

SESSION 3	
Transversal topics	Toine Timmermans , Program Manager Sustainable Food Chains at Wageningen University
	Anja De Cunto , Team leader for Food at EUROCITIES
	Maiwenn L'Hoir , Project Manager for the fight against food waste and food insecurity - sustainable food, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, France
Topic block I: "Cooperation in the food value chain: From farm to fork"	Angela Frigo , Secretary General, European Food Banks Federation (FEBA)
	Eva Sali , Policy Advisor, Food safety, Copa Cogeca
	Luc Lignon , Director of Food Policy Department, City of Montpellier, France
Topic block II: "Food business initiatives"	Els Bedert , Director, Product Policy & Sustainability at EuroCommerce
	Timothy John Hobley , Associate Professor, Technical University of Denmark, National Food Institute
	Minna Huttunen , Ministerial Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland
Topic block III: "Supporting consumer behavioural change"	Gyula Kasza , Coordinator of Maradék Nélkül (Project Wasteless), the national food waste prevention programme of Hungary; Associate Professor at University of Veterinary Medicine Hungary
	Camille Perrin , Senior Food Policy Officer at The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC)
	Marjolijn Schrijnen , Senior Project Manager, Netherlands Nutrition Centre
Farewell remarks	Colin Scicluna , Head of Cabinet of the Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, European Commission
	Sandra Gallina , Director-General, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
	Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen , Director-General, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission

2.6. MAIN MODERATORS

Two main moderators guided citizens through all three sessions and steered the discussions in the plenary. They provided information on the general goal of the panel and the methodology of the individual sessions as well as on organisational aspects. The main moderators also facilitated debates between the expert speakers, ensured that knowledge was provided fairly and impartially during the discussions and facilitated question-and-answer sessions involving experts and

citizens as well as interaction between moderators and citizens on content and the panel's processes. Furthermore, the main moderators brought together all results in the final plenaries of each session. The main moderators were:

- Jacob Birkenhäger (ifok);
- Kathrine Collin Hagan (Danish Board of Technology Foundation).

2.7. FACILITATORS

Citizens were split into 12 working groups, each facilitated and assisted by two members of the Deliberation Team: one experienced facilitator and one assistant. The facilitators' job was to lead the discussions in the working groups and enable a smooth workflow by:

- establishing a friendly and mutually respectful atmosphere to promote a balanced contribution from all participants;

- ensuring that all citizens were informed about the overall process and guiding citizens in the group work;
- making sure that the objectives of the working group sessions were achieved (i.e. facilitating the identification of conflicts and disagreements between citizens, promoting the emergence of debate and consensus between citizens);

- timekeeping, note-taking and consolidating deliberation output in multilingual and interlinked working documents;
- linking requests made by the citizens in the working groups to the support team or the experts (e.g. by collecting pending remarks or questions);
- participating in debriefing sessions with the Deliberation Team.

The experienced and professional facilitators were employed by ifok, Missions Publiques or the Danish Board of Technology Foundation. During discussions in the working groups, they were supported by facilitation assistants, mostly consisting of Brussels-based students and trainees. All facilitators and assistants followed common instructions provided in a facilitation guide and a roll-out document (one per session). They engaged in two dedicated briefing and training meetings prior to each session.

2.8. OBSERVERS

A limited number of observers were allowed to follow the work of this citizens' panel. The aim was to provide transparency and visibility for this innovative democratic format while preserving a safe space for participating citizens, which is crucial for a trustworthy debate environment. Observers were permitted to attend and follow the discussions in plenary sessions and working groups. The maximum number of observers permitted to each working group was three.

Internal observers also came from the organising partners and institutions (e.g. internal staff from DG Communication, DG Health and Food Safety or other DGs and EU institutions). External observers included researchers (from universities or think tanks), civil society actors and other stakeholders. With the consent of the citizens concerned, external observers could conduct interviews with them, for research purposes only, if it did not impede the proceedings of the panels.





3. Methodological framework and individual sessions

3.1. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste consisted of three sessions with different goals.

- In the first session (on site in Brussels), participants were introduced to the issue at hand, had the opportunity to get to know each other, and were able to build a sense of community and trust. They received initial expert inputs and were then asked to identify and prioritise approaches that they found promising in tackling the problem of food waste.
- The second session was an online session and focused on a deeper understanding of the issue. The main goal was to encourage the exchange of ideas and perspectives among participants, identify areas of consensus and disagreement and formulate initial ideas for recommendations in three separate topic blocks.
- The third and final session (on site in Brussels) was dedicated to shaping the recommendations based on the ideas and insights gained in the first two sessions, and was supported by further expert inputs. The third session ensured that the citizens' panel produced concrete recommendations that can be handed over to the Commission and shared with relevant stakeholders.

Figure 2: Overall methodological flow of the panel sessions



Throughout the panel sessions, there was ample time for team building and exchange, during both plenary sessions and group work. The structure of the sessions was designed to encourage interaction among participants and to ensure that all voices were heard. As the citizens' panel took place in a multilingual setting, citizens were always able to speak

in their mother tongue, facilitated by interpretation. Working groups were composed in a way that allowed sufficient geographical diversity, with each group including participants from both larger and smaller countries and speaking a maximum of five of different languages. Facilitators could lead the discussion in their mother tongue or in English.

3.2. SESSION 1: PROCESS AND OUTPUTS

The first session was held in Brussels on 16–18 December 2022. Its goal was to generate ideas and to build clusters of approaches that citizens found most promising for further discussions in the upcoming sessions.

Day 1 (Friday, 16 December 2022)

Figure 3: Vice-President of the European Commission Dubravka Šuica welcomes the citizens



On the first day, citizens were welcomed by the main moderators and European Commission representatives: Vice-President for Democracy and Demography (European Commission) **Dubravka Šuica**, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety **Stella Kyriakides** and Director-General of DG Communication **Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen**. They highlighted the importance of the citizens' panel and the role of the EU in tackling food waste. The main moderators walked

citizens through the agenda of session 1 as well as the next sessions. After some icebreaker games, a short online survey helped citizens to dive into the topic of food waste. To further prepare the citizens for the following discussions, **Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul** (Deputy Head of Unit, Citizens' Dialogues Unit, DG Communication) briefly introduced the EU bodies, as well as the decision-making and legislative process. **Anne-Laure Gassin** (Team Leader, food waste, Farm

to Fork Strategy Unit, DG Health and Food Safety) then introduced the topic of food waste in detail. The topic was further expanded by **Gyula Kasza** (Coordinator of the national food waste prevention programme of Hungary) and **Toine Timmermans** (Programme Manager of Sustainable Food Chains at Wageningen University & Research), focusing on the questions 'what's the challenge?' and 'what can we do?'. In addition, a panel of diverse experts and practitioners from the public and private sectors (covering the

food supply chain, research community and non-governmental organisations) presented different perspectives on the topic of food waste prevention. Through an online survey, citizens continuously submitted questions that were answered throughout the weekend by experts in the KIC. During the first panel meeting, citizens raised over 80 questions, many going beyond the topic of food waste and focusing on the functioning of food systems more generally.

Day 2 (Saturday, 17 December 2022)

On the second day, citizens were divided into and worked in 12 parallel working groups (with simultaneous interpretation), facilitated by experienced facilitators. The groups produced their content in multilingual spreadsheets that were interlinked with other groups. During the first part of the day, group discussions took place on EU values, food and food waste in general. Subsequently, the discussions focused on potential solutions and ideas for reducing food waste and their prioritisation. Each group chose their top five ideas and approaches for reducing food waste. Citizens were then asked to connect the approaches of other

groups with their own ideas, thereby contributing to the clustering of all 60 ideas and approaches that had been prioritised beforehand. Each group was then allocated one of the clusters previously identified and was asked to label and discuss the cluster. Participants complemented the clusters with additional ideas and justified the importance of each cluster. The goal was to give citizens a shared feeling of ownership and allow everyone to add their thoughts to the topics. At the end of the day, the finalised clusters were automatically translated into all official EU languages to provide citizens with a version in their own language.



Day 3 (Sunday, 18 December 2022)

Figure 4: Citizens prioritising clusters in an open forum



On the third day, each participant was given a list of clusters in their own language at the beginning of the plenary session. Speakers from each working group presented the clusters and their justifications. Citizens were then asked to prioritise the clusters in an open forum consisting of 10 posters displaying the clusters and their names, as given by the working groups. Citizens received five points each, which they then used to rate their preferred clusters on the

posters. After a coffee break, a question-and-answer session was held with the purpose of answering open and recurring questions that came up during the weekend, as well as spontaneous questions in the plenary. Afterwards, the ranking of clusters was presented along with information for the next session. Final remarks and a farewell were given by **Richard Kühnel** (DG Communication).

Table 3: Session 1 agenda

Friday (16 December 2022)	PLENARY
14:00–14:15	Welcome by the European Commission (European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides, Director-General of DG Communication Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen) and message from Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica
14:15–15:30	Why are we here? Getting to know each other, input on EU institutions and legislation, role of citizens in this process
15:30–16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:00–18:00	What are we talking about? Introduction to food waste and the value chain, moderated panel discussion on actions to reduce food waste with different stakeholders, organisational matters
Saturday (17 December 2022)	WORKING GROUPS
09:00–10:30	Who are you and what is important for you? Getting to know each other, discussing personal values, exchange on food (waste) habits
10:30–11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00–13:00	How can we reduce food waste and which solutions seem most important? Discussion of different approaches and actions, generating ideas, prioritisation
13:00–14:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:30–16:00	Which ideas of other groups are similar to our own? Connecting approaches with those of other working groups (connecting and clustering)
16:00–16:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:30–18:00	How can we label similar ideas and why are they important in reducing food waste? Working with clusters of approaches and labelling them (categorising)
Sunday (18 December 2022)	PLENARY
09:00–10:45	What is the result of the working groups? Presentation of clusters, open forum, prioritisation of clusters
10:45–11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15–13:00	What have we learned this weekend and what comes next? Responses to central questions, presentation of prioritised clusters, transition to session 2, feedback, final remarks and farewell by Richard Kühnel, DG Communication

THE 10 CLUSTERS

The results of the working groups were grouped into 10 clusters by the Deliberation Team, using the words and ideas of the citizens. During the open forum, the clusters were prioritised in the following order:

1. local farmers and small producers: a viable solution to food waste?,
2. learning and awareness raising,
3. 'taste the waste': a campaign against food waste,
4. share, don't waste! / sharing is saving / a solidarity union for fair access to food to avoid waste,
5. labelling: inform to waste less,
6. menu sizes and leftover consumption,
7. initiatives to be adopted by supermarkets and the distribution chain to report on food waste and reduce food waste,
8. quality and quantity of information on food waste along the value chain,
9. incentives to reduce corporate food waste,
10. the ability of all affected participants to influence EU food policy.



3.3. SESSION 2: PROCESS AND OUTPUTS

The second panel session was held online on 20–22 January 2023. The goals of this session were for citizens to build upon the approaches formulated in the first session and to draft the first concrete ideas for citizens' recommendations to reduce food waste. Following an iterative, peer review process, citizens in the 12 working groups reviewed and built on each other's work, putting forward 24 food waste reduction ideas. These then constituted the basis for the development of the panel's final recommendations during its third (final) session.

To structure the work of the session, the approaches collected in the first session were clustered into three topic blocks by the Knowledge Committee (see also Figure 5):

- topic block I – cooperation in the food value chain: from farm to fork,
- topic block II – food business initiatives,
- topic block III – supporting consumer behavioural change.

Day 1 (Friday, 20 January 2023)

On day 1, citizens were welcomed by moderators, who encouraged participants to share their experiences as regards their own attitudes and behaviours concerning food waste since session 1 (supported by interactive polls). Moderators then briefly walked citizens through the agenda of session 2, before giving the floor to experts for a general presentation on EU and Member States' actions to prevent and reduce food waste. First, **Anne-Laure Gassin** (DG Health and Food Safety)

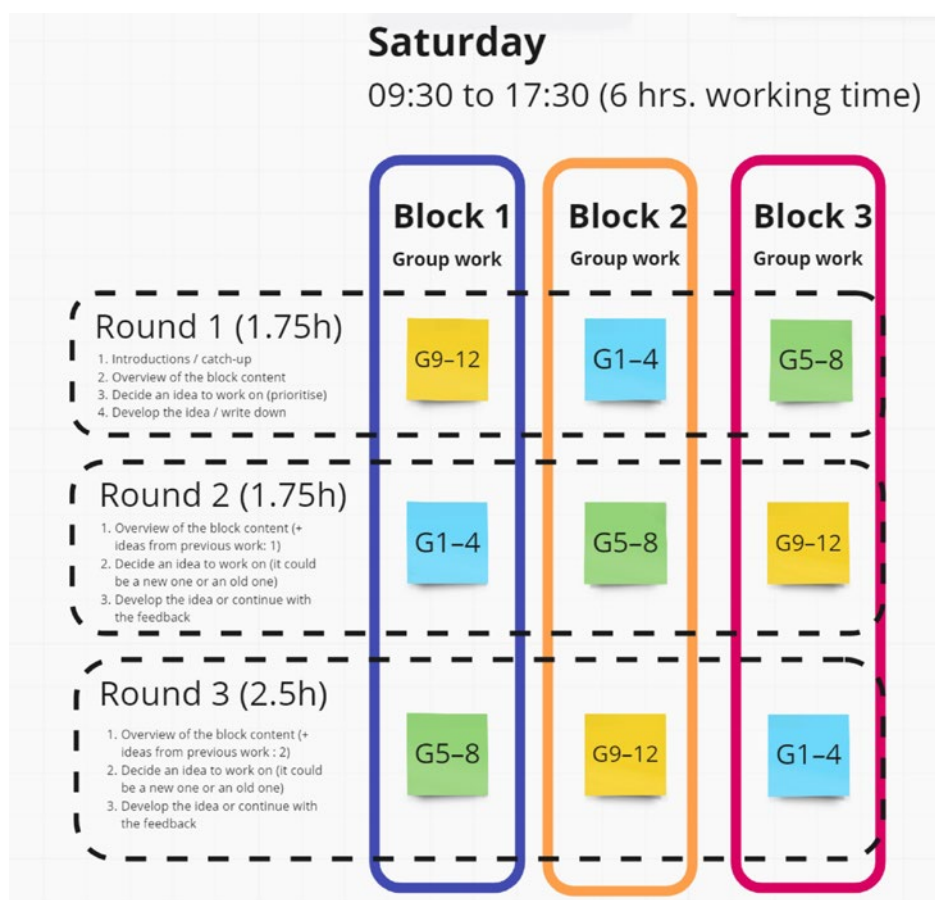
updated citizens on the status of the EU's action plan on food waste. **Toine Timmermans** (Wageningen University & Research) presented approaches for tackling food waste at the national level and the importance of public–private partnerships. A series of experts and practitioners then gave more specific inputs in three moderated panel discussions – one per topic block.

Day 2 (Saturday, 21 January 2023)

On day 2, citizens worked in 12 parallel working groups, supported by experienced facilitators and simultaneous interpretation. During the first part of the day, each topic block was assigned to four working groups, which were asked to formulate an idea based on the content of their block. Facilitators noted down the idea(s) in multilingual spreadsheets that were interlinked with those of other groups. In the second round, the groups were assigned to a different topic block. They were asked to provide feedback on an idea

formulated by another group and to propose their own ideas related to the topics of the block. During the third round of the day, groups moved on to the last topic block, and were given another two previously formulated ideas to comment on. In addition, they could choose between developing a new idea or providing further feedback to already formulated ideas from the second round. Throughout the day, citizens were able to submit questions that were answered during the weekend by experts in the KIC.

Figure 6: The 12 working groups covered all three topic blocks during day 2 (figure available only in English)



Day 3 (Sunday, 22 January 2023)

On day 3, participants met again in their working groups for the fourth and final round of group deliberations. Each working group became the owner of two or three ideas within one topic block, and integrated feedback received on those ideas from other groups. The groups were then asked to consolidate their assigned sets of ideas. Afterwards, a citizen was designated by each working group to present their group's consolidated ideas for recommendations in an online plenary and reply

to further questions raised by the moderators. At the end, the main moderators asked citizens for feedback on the second panel session and provided an overview of the third session.

The outcome of the working groups was the drafting of 24 different ideas that were to be transformed into final recommendations during the third and last panel session.

Table 4: Session 2 agenda

Friday (20 January 2023)	PLENARY		
14:30–15:00	Welcoming and presentation of the agenda		
15:00–15:30	Presentations on transversal topic		
15:30–15:40	<i>Break</i>		
15:40–16:35	Moderated panel discussion on topic block I: cooperation in the food value chain: from farm to fork		
16:35–16:45	<i>Break</i>		
16:45–17:40	Moderated panel discussion on topic block II: food business initiatives		
17:40–17:50	<i>Break</i>		
17:50–18:45	Moderated panel discussion on topic block III: supporting consumer behavioural change		
18:45–19:00	Agenda overview for the following days		
Saturday (21 January 2023)	WORKING GROUPS		
09:30–11:15	Round 1: developing ideas for recommendations		
	Working groups 1–4: topic block II	Working groups 5–8: topic block III	Working groups 9–12: topic block I
11:15–11:30	<i>Break</i>		
11:30–13:15	Round 2: feedback on ideas and developing ideas for recommendations		
	Working groups 1–4: topic block I	Working groups 5–8: topic block II	Working groups 9–12: topic block III
13:15–14:45	<i>Lunch break</i>		
14:45–16:00	Round 3, part 1: feedback on ideas and developing ideas for recommendations		
	Working groups 1–4: topic block III	Working groups 5–8: topic block I	Working groups 9–12: topic block II
16:00–16:15	<i>Break</i>		
16:15–17:30	Round 3, part 2: feedback on ideas and developing ideas for recommendations		
	Working groups 1–4: topic block III	Working groups 5–8: topic block I	Working groups 9–12: topic block II
Sunday (22 January 2023)	MIXED SETTING		
09:30–11:30	Working groups		
	Round 4: consolidation of ideas for recommendations		
11:30–12:00	Working groups 1–4: topic block II	Working groups 5–8: topic block III	Working groups 9–12: topic block I
	<i>Break</i>		
12:00–14:00	Plenary Presentation of ideas and transition to session 3		

3.4. SESSION 3: PROCESS AND OUTPUTS

During the third session, on 10–12 February 2023, the citizens finalised their recommendations. Meeting in person in Brussels, they discussed, in 12 working groups, the feedback and input provided by experts

from different backgrounds before finalising the recommendations. In a final voting procedure, each citizen expressed their agreement or disagreement with each of the recommendations.

Day 1 (Friday, 10 February 2023)

Figure 7: Citizens discussing in the plenary



The first day of this final session was dedicated to receiving and discussing feedback on the ideas for recommendations drafted in session 2. In a plenary session, expert speakers of various backgrounds (see section 2.5.) provided their overall observations and insights on the ideas proposed by citizens. From their specific perspectives, they highlighted where they saw either gaps or opportunities to improve citizens'

ideas as regards their possible impact on food waste prevention. Afterwards, citizens had the chance to discuss with experts how to further develop their ideas in three parallel plenary sessions, each addressing a specific topic block. Here, four working groups, each including up to 50 citizens, each met three experts (see section 2.5.) and discussed on how to further develop their ideas.

Day 2 (Saturday, 11 February 2023)

Based on their original ideas and on the input and feedback received during the plenaries, as well as on the subsequent discussions, citizens returned to the 12 working groups to draft, develop and finalise their recommendations. During this process, they identified key questions and any missing information hampering the formulation of comprehensive yet

precise recommendations. To answer these questions and break potential deadlocks, several experts and members of the KIC briefly joined the discussions for short exchanges, before citizens finalised their recommendations, supported in their consensus-finding by experienced facilitators.

Day 3 (Sunday, 12 February 2023)

Figure 8: Citizens voting on recommendations using ballot papers



In the final plenary session, representatives of each of the 12 working groups presented their group's recommendations to the whole panel. Following the presentation of all recommendations for each topic block, citizens were asked to vote in favour or against in a confidential voting process using ballots. Abstention was also an option. The purpose was to verify the level of consensus on the recommendations among

the whole panel and how strongly they were supported (the results of the vote can be found in Table 6). Lastly, the panel was concluded with words of appreciation by **Colin Scicluna**, Head of Cabinet of the Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, European Commission, **Sandra Gallina**, Director-General of DG Health and Food Safety, and **Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen**, Director-General of DG Communication.



Table 5: Session 3 agenda

Friday (10 February 2023)	PLENARY		
14:00–14:30	Welcoming and presentation of the agenda		
14:30–15:30	Inputs on transversal topics and goal of the recommendations		
15:30–16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16:00–18:00	Three sub-plenaries		
	Working groups 1–4: topic block II: food business initiatives	Working groups 5–8: topic block III: supporting consumer behavioural change	Working groups 9–12: topic block I: cooperation in the food value chain: from farm to fork
Saturday (11 February 2023)	WORKING GROUPS		
09:00–10:30	Deliberation on idea 1 and drafting of recommendation 1		
10:30–11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:00–12:30	Deliberation on idea 2 and drafting of recommendation 2		
12:30–14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>		
14:00–15:30	Experts' inputs on draft recommendations 1 and 2		
15:30–16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16:00–17:30	Finalising of recommendations 1 and 2		
Sunday (12 February 2023)	PLENARY		
09:00–09:15	Welcoming back		
09:15–09:50	Presentation of recommendations on topic block I and voting		
09:50–10:25	Presentation of recommendations on topic block II and voting		
10:25–11:00	Presentation of recommendations on topic block III and voting		
11:00–11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:30–11:45	Group photo		
11:45–12:15	Presentation of results		
12:15–12:45	Ceremonial moments and official speeches by EU institutions		
12:45–13:00	Farewell		

The results of the session were 23 recommendations, which received varying levels of support during the final voting on the last day. Table 6 shows the recommendations sorted in the order in which they

were presented in plenary. The full recommendations including the title, main description, justification and further details can be found in the annex.

Table 6: Recommendations

No	TITLE OF THE RECOMMENDATION	In favour	Against	Abstained
1	The closer the farmer, the happier the consumer: less waste, more sustainability	120	15	5
2	Tastes of home: public and private support for local farming to reduce food waste	119	9	12
3	Share, don't waste!	93	31	16
4	Sharing of data and best practices across Europe	97	27	16
5	Gathering data across the food supply chain	101	28	11
6	Citizens' voices matter: citizen participation in European food policy	91	37	12
7	Just picked: the value of seasonal food	103	26	11
8	EU-wide food exchange network	84	41	14
9	Planned purchases and redistribution	85	38	16
10	Restaurants stand for 'enjoy without wasting'	113	17	9
11	All waste has a weight	73	48	18
12	A mandatory reporting system for transparency coupled with penalties and rewards	68	56	15
13	EU-wide legislation on the destruction of unsold food products – a peer learning approach across Member States	109	20	10
14	Transparency on food waste for visibility and action	102	22	15
15	Innovation in packaging and use of packaging when needed	116	18	5
16	Broadening the definition of food waste in order to save unharvested food	110	19	10
17	Encouraging adults to take action on food waste as a priority	113	20	6
18	Nutritional awareness and sustainable food in primary and secondary schools	123	9	7
19	Promote and support food sharing applications and platforms connecting consumers with each other	97	25	17
20	Save food, save money: a European campaign against food waste in cooperation with food retailers on four weekends a year	98	31	10
21	'Stop food waste': a week of food waste awareness at school	116	16	7
22	To provide consumers keys to be aware and independent on their impact on food waste and to understand how to process, preserve and reuse a product before and after the date has passed NB: A 'use by' date is a safety date after which a product should not be consumed; 'best before' indicates the date until which a product keeps its optimal quality.	108	26	5
23	The implementation of standardised practices at the retail level when promoting to consumers products close to the expiration date	109	18	12



Citizens shared feedback regarding their experience in the European citizens' panel in a feedback survey. Only 4 % of citizens had taken part in a participation process before. From their perspective, the panel represented a success: 83 % of citizens believed that the panel 'totally' (34 %) or 'somewhat' (49 %) represented the whole society, although some people remarked that some disadvantaged groups were missing. When

being asked to judge their overall experience, 97 % of the participants were either 'totally satisfied' (66 %) or 'somewhat satisfied' (31 %) with the citizens' panel. With similarly large majorities, citizens reported that their knowledge about food waste had increased (96 %), that their opinion towards food waste had changed (77 %) and that their view on the EU had become more positive (64 %).

It was amazing to cooperate with people from all over the EU and see the vast majority is interested and is trying to find the right way to improve the situation with food waste.

Lucie, 40, Czechia







4. Next steps

The European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste has been the first of its kind: it was the first transnational citizens' assembly organised by an executive body in connection with a concrete policy proposal.

The 23 recommendations put forward by the citizens take **a broad systemic approach** and address food waste prevention within the functioning of food systems more generally. Citizens' recommendations associate food waste reduction more generally with a fair, equitable food supply chain that ensures solidarity (considering the balance of power between actors in the food supply chain and addressing unfair trading practices that can lead to food waste, supporting local producers, etc.). In the light of growing challenges to food security, citizens recommend mechanisms to facilitate the redistribution of surplus food to those in need and call for broadening the definition of food waste to include food left unharvested on the field and for the encouragement of gleaning. From the outset, citizens focused on the need to engage all actors and strengthen collaboration across the food supply chain. This **holistic approach** is also reflected in the three topics addressed by the citizens' recommendations: (1) cooperation in the food value chain: from farm to fork, (2) food business initiatives and (3) supporting consumer behavioural change.

The recommendations reaffirm the need for an **evidence-based approach** to guide effective food waste prevention by all players, highlighting the importance of monitoring. They also recognise the need for the EU to set **an overarching goal** to reduce food waste, with Member States taking steps to ensure that this goal is met. The **role of education** as regards food, and food waste in particular, is prominent, receiving the highest level of endorsement from citizens. This sends a strong message to Member States on the importance of integrating food education in school curricula in order

to help build understanding and appreciation of the value of food from an early age.

Some recommendations reflect the European Commission's **ongoing work** with Member States and stakeholders to fight food waste across the EU. For example, the Commission is already engaging with relevant actors to share best practices in food waste prevention through the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste ⁽⁶⁾, established in 2016, and it encourages commitments from food businesses through the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices ⁽⁷⁾, adopted by stakeholders in 2021. Addressing consumer food waste is an important part of the Commission's work, be it through dedicated projects (e.g. the European Consumer Food Waste Forum published a 'best-practice' compendium ⁽⁸⁾ including solutions, tools and recommendations to help reduce consumer food waste), research and innovation ⁽⁹⁾ or grants ⁽¹⁰⁾ to support stakeholders in taking action. EU guidelines to facilitate food donation ⁽¹¹⁾ can support the implementation of harmonised approaches by Member States, as suggested by EU citizens.

At the same time, the recommendations indicate **points for further consideration**, for instance forbidding the destruction of safe surplus food. While already reflected in the waste hierarchy (enshrined in European waste legislation ⁽¹²⁾), this principle could be further considered in the Commission's work to establish sustainable food systems in order to ensure that more of the food produced is used for human consumption. Furthermore, the recommendations also **reveal some areas of possible future action** for the Commission, Member States and other players. These include the need to improve outreach and engagement with citizens across the EU. For instance, the UN International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste ⁽¹³⁾ is not well known; some

⁽⁶⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste_en.

⁽⁷⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy/sustainable-food-processing/code-conduct_en.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC133004>.

⁽⁹⁾ See, for example, the 'Changing practices and habits through open, responsible, and social innovation towards zero food waste' (Chorizo) project (<https://chorizoproject.eu>).

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu-food-loss-waste-prevention-hub/new/show/4956.

⁽¹¹⁾ Commission notice – EU guidelines on food donation (OJ C 361, 25.10.2017, p.1) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_2017.361.01.0001.01.ENG).

⁽¹²⁾ Directive (EU) 2018/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (OJ L 150, 14.6.2018, p. 109) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/851/oj?locale=en>).

⁽¹³⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/international-day-awareness-food-loss-and-waste_en.



citizens learned about the food waste issue only when called to participate in the panel; and there is a lack of awareness of ongoing work in their own Member States. The Commission will continue working with Member States and stakeholders to further build awareness and support behavioural change as regards food waste.

With regard to the European Commission's policymaking, the **outcome of the citizens' panel will support the overarching work of the Commission on food waste and serve as a guide to help Member States in achieving the future targets.** The recommendations complement the impact assessment and the public consultation carried out by the Commission to support the setting of EU food waste reduction targets and have been considered in the preparation of the legislative proposal, adopted by the Commission on 5 July 2023. As part of a targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive⁽¹⁴⁾, the

Commission has proposed the setting of food waste reduction targets to be achieved by Member States by 2030 in order to accelerate the EU's contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. A shorter 'citizens' report'⁽¹⁵⁾ on the citizens' work has also been published together with the legislative proposal. The success of the citizens' panel will depend on the degree to which Member States will be able to consider and convert citizens' recommendations into concrete policy measures and actions, as and where appropriate.

The citizens' panel's recommendations will also be shared and discussed with the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, bringing together Member States and stakeholders, so that they may consider these in their food waste prevention programmes. Citizens will be kept informed of key EU developments in the field of food waste prevention, such as the adoption of the legislative proposal.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste, COM(2023)420 final (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/Proposal%20for%20a%20DIRECTIVE%20OF%20THE%20EUROPEAN%20PARLIAMENT%20AND%20OF%20THE%20COUNCIL%20amending%20Directive%20200898EC%20on%20waste%20COM_2023_420.pdf).

⁽¹⁵⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/fw_eu-actions_ia_report-2023_annex-016.pdf



Annex: full recommendations

TOPIC BLOCK I – COOPERATION IN THE FOOD VALUE CHAIN: FROM FARM TO FORK

RECOMMENDATION 1

The closer the farmer, the happier the consumer: Less waste, more sustainability

We recommend that the EU continues its work with policies and initiatives to support small-scale producers in their trade with retailers and supermarkets. Large retailers/processors have a clear power advantage in this relationship, and often steer the trade in their favour, sometimes resulting in food waste.

Three aspects need specific attention:

1. The EU and its Member States should encourage retailers and supermarkets to always source from the closest producer possible. Furthermore, they should investigate and develop incentives that motivate retailers to follow these recommendations.
2. The EU needs to monitor and track the ban on last minute cancellations from 2019 and be ready to intervene if it is not followed.
3. The EU needs to continue working with policies on ugly/misshaped food and investigate further the consequences in relation to food waste when such products are rejected.

Rationale/justification

Supporting small-scale producers and their sales in close proximity have high potential to reduce food waste in several ways, both along the value chain and in households:

- When transportation of food is long and supermarkets try to be cost efficient by increasing volumes, food waste is likely.
- Local producers can be more adaptable and respond faster to changes in demand, which can reduce waste.
- Food from nearby producers is often of higher quality and longer lasting, which can result in less waste in households.
- Food currently disposed of due to its wrong shape can be avoided.
- Food waste due to last minute cancellations can be avoided if more comprehensive regulations and frameworks supporting small producers are in place.

Additional notes

Positive influence on food security and health.

Emphasizing the importance of combining this recommendation with other initiatives focusing on consumer behaviour, public awareness, and education to strengthen the cooperation between stakeholders and improve the general understanding of food waste and its relation to local food production.

Challenges:

- Trade-off with EU principle on free trade and free market, therefore it can be opposed by large corporations/retailers and lobbyist groups.
- It is important to consider and discuss what is “local” and what is a “short supply chain” when working further with this recommendation, since there is no common definition for this at EU level.
- Seasonality of products and demand of consumers can challenge a potentially limited supply due to focus on food from short food chain.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Tastes of home: Public and private support for local farming to reduce food waste

We recommend local & regional authorities to support local farmers with practical solutions and initiatives aimed at reducing food waste. The goal is to encourage stakeholders to cooperate more closely to drive these initiatives and thereby create a sustainable food system that benefits both farmers and consumers.

Several initiatives are suggested for local authorities to initiate:

1. Tax reliefs and subsidies for small scale farmers.
2. Support local farmers in finding new markets where they can be protected from unfair power relations with retailers, for example by allocating public spaces for sales.
3. Encourage inclusive processes and initiatives with value chain stakeholders for the work with food waste, for example by promoting the use of “food waste apps” in a city.
4. Support associations and other actors that are supporting local farmers in food waste issues, such as food banks.

Rationale/justification

Supporting small-scale producers and their sales in short proximity have high potential to reduce food waste in several ways, both along the value chain and in households:

- When transportation of food is long and supermarkets try to be cost efficient by increasing volumes, food waste is likely.
- Local producers can respond faster to changes in demand, and be more adaptable to changes, which can reduce waste.
- Food from local producers is often of a higher quality and lasts longer, which means that shortening the value chain would reduce waste both at the transport and household level.

Additional notes

Emphasizing the importance of combining this recommendation with other initiatives focusing on consumer behaviour, public awareness, and education to strengthen the cooperation between stakeholders and improve the general understanding of food waste and its relation to local food production.

Main challenges

- Large scope and complexity of the recommendation. It will take time to analyse and implement many of the suggested initiatives, and it requires solid monitoring systems.
- Trade-off with EU principle on free trade and free market which can challenge the initiative and its acceptance by different stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 3**Share don't waste!**

We recommend that food banks, and redistributors in general, should be financially supported at a basic level by governments through a structural scheme common across Europe, instead of primarily working by private donations (but not 100% funded, so it does not turn into a business). We also recommend a platform that connects the various existing apps that connect retailers to food banks. The platform should be user-friendly, efficient, and managed centrally. We also recommend that the food redistributed (donated or sold at a lower price) from retailers to food banks is given away in good time and good condition, preferably 3-5 days before it goes bad (rather than the current 48-hour guideline). The incentive to do this could be a tax deduction for retailers, that decreases the closer the redistribution is to the items' expiration date. They must donate a minimum amount of food to be eligible for this deduction.

Rationale/justification

Since food waste cannot be completely avoided in the current system, we should at least work to save the food that is wasted. In this context, we should utilise all the tools already available (food banks, applications, relevant associations, initiatives, etc.).

Additional notes

A challenge is how to strengthen the capacity of the food banks without making them into a business industry (as we rather want to handle food waste upstream).

RECOMMENDATION 4**Sharing of data and best practices across Europe**

We recommend that governments in each country share their data and best practices on actions to target all steps of the food waste chain, from producers to consumers, to the European Commission's platform for food waste (EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste). This information will then be managed and analysed by a special committee of EU researchers that work to promote the good practices and make them easily accessible. The data on good practices should be categorized by types of production and types of consumption. In addition, we want to promote a network of cities/regions which access the data and utilize the practices that work best for them, based on similar consumption and production patterns. The network is set up for these localities to learn from each other based on these similarities. The concept of "twin cities" could be applied for this purpose: cities with similar food waste issues work together to solve them.

Rationale/justification

Best practices could be shared more efficiently and consistently. Also, this would utilise both the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, the Eurocities and "twin cities" concept. We want to empower the collaboration of cities and regions across Europe.

Additional notes

RECOMMENDATION 5

Gathering data across the food supply chain

We recommend that data on how, where, who, why, and when food waste occurs across the food supply chain gets collected by an EU body or other agencies or research institutions. This could be through:

1. Individual consumer behaviour through app measurement.
2. Face-to-face collection of data, through the Eurobarometer survey.
3. Surveys sent to schools and other educational organizations. Could be before/after a school intervention targeting food waste.
4. The use of citizen panel citizens as a representative cohort for research purposes.
5. Journalling study of consumer behaviour could be an intervention study. Inspiration from consumer scan panels of BE/NE (Belgium and the Netherlands).
6. The use of scientifically validated measures from universities.
7. Observational studies – specifically studying actual waste amounts by drawing on existing waste management processes of towns and municipalities.
8. Collecting and comparing invoices from supermarket/farmer interactions.
9. Standardizing forms for reporting waste.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because if we know where, when, and why we are wasting food, we can launch more targeted awareness raising campaigns, and provide a detailed insight on where we could have the biggest impact on the reduction of food waste. Our group believes that by collecting more accurate data about where exactly in the food chain food is wasted, then we will be able to address our solutions to food waste more effectively. The current common methodology for collecting EU data on food waste (as defined by the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597) focuses on measuring the amount of waste, whereas the aim of our proposal is to gather more detailed data on the who, when, and where of food waste. These additional data-gathering projects/initiatives could be used to supplement the quantitative data gathered in the new yearly reporting by Member States. They would provide more specific data on the “what, how, who, when and where” of food waste.

Additional notes

Notes on data we want collected: We should collect data on the “what, how, who, when, and where” of food waste. **What/When:** What food are we wasting and in what circumstances? What exactly are people throwing away – how many grams are left on the plate? Data on how much we buy vs. how much we throw away. **How:** How is it wasted – is it thrown away? Is it cooked too late/spoiled/out of date? Did we buy too much? Cultural differences could also be considered. **Who:** Who in the supply chain wastes food – distributors, consumers, etc? At consumer level, is there a breakdown of which consumers are wasting the most food – this could be linked to age or country? (Note: will people want to provide this data?).

Relating to point 5): The name of the company we’re drawing inspiration from is Growth for Knowledge/GFK.

The group believes that respecting the privacy and personal data of European citizens is very important. Any studies conducted based in our recommendation should respect this.

RECOMMENDATION 6**Citizens' voices matter: Citizen participation in European food policy**

Building on the Conference on the Future of Europe and the current EU Citizens' Panel on Food Waste, we recommend the establishment of local and national citizen engagement fora. These fora would be tasked with following, monitoring and offering advice on national strategies to implement EU directives on reducing food waste from the perspective of citizens. We further recommend that the EU Platform on Food Waste should include citizens' representation and engagement that coordinates exchanges between the engagement fora. At both national and EU levels, the fora should offer a platform for information sharing and mutual learning between citizens/ consumers, stakeholders, and policy makers.

Rationale/justification

We offer this recommendation because it is important to give voice to citizens, ensure a fair and transparent process, and to allow citizens and decision makers to coordinate and learn from each other. Citizens are experts on their own lives, and their perspectives must be considered at local, national, and EU level.

Additional notes**RECOMMENDATION 7****Just picked: The value of seasonal food**

We recommend a change in consumer habits by informing consumers of the value of seasonal food. This should be done through clear signs in stores that allows consumers to clearly identify seasonal produce. Information about seasonality should also be communicated to a wide audience through public information campaigns. Informing consumers through signs on shelves and campaigns may incentivize producers to grow seasonal produce. We further recommend the production of better data on the most effective methods for incentivizing production of seasonal produce and limiting the import of non-seasonal low-quality foods.

Rationale/justification

We offer this recommendation because non-seasonal food is often imported and/or of worse quality than seasonal foods. Higher quality produce can impact consumer behaviour, as we tend to value higher quality food more, thus wasting less.

Additional notes

TOPIC BLOCK II – FOOD BUSINESS INITIATIVES

RECOMMENDATION 8

EU-wide food exchange network

We recommend major distributors to be directly connected through a register on an EU-wide website that allows the exchange of about-to-expire or surplus food. The webpage would prevent food waste by enabling communication within the levels (see below) and the next sectoral unit in the supply chain. Businesses can sign up and offer or buy surplus food at a lower price. There would be three levels:

1. Level one would consist of producers, farmers, and distributors.
2. Level two would incorporate supermarkets, food banks, and community kitchens.
3. Level three encompasses consumers and households.

Rationale/justification

Additional notes

RECOMMENDATION 9

Planned purchases and redistribution

We recommend developing a legal framework to harmonise Member States' legislation on practices for the entire supply chain regarding the redistribution of surplus and about-to-expire food, considering safety regulations and data forecasting. Purchases should be adjusted to what will be sold. Supermarkets and suppliers could be incentivised with benefits (for example, through tax breaks) for selling at a lower price or donating.

Rationale/justification

Additional notes

RECOMMENDATION 10

Restaurants stand for “enjoy without wasting”

We recommend to the European institutions the following plan to reduce food waste in restaurants. Once certain quality criteria (like the ones outlined below and some others) are met, all types of restaurants should be allowed to show a logo (which is harmonised across the EU). The logo would advertise the possibility to take leftovers home and waiters should provide packages for food to take leftovers home. Those restaurants that implement the logo plan would write on their menus an additional text stating “you can take your leftovers home”. If there are still leftovers of prepared food, they should be offered to employees. If there are leftovers of raw food from the kitchen, they should be offered to Food Banks/other charity institutions.

If food is inedible, it should be used to produce renewable energy. To encourage restaurants to meet these quality criteria (or further quality criteria), financial support should be given to restaurants to carry out this plan. A tax relief could serve as a financial incentive and additional aid could be granted. As leftovers from kitchens can be weighed or measured, they could be monitored and taken into consideration for the tax relief.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because it would reduce food waste coming from restaurants and significantly reduce the shaming effect which might occur when asking for leftovers. If restaurants act as role models, private households will be encouraged to reduce food waste as well.

Additional notes

RECOMMENDATION 11**All waste has a weight**

We recommend that organisations in charge of waste management be obliged to weigh, scale or measure organic waste. In the short term, the plan should focus on public institutions (e.g., schools and hospitals), entire neighbourhoods or districts, and in the long-term, it should also include private households. Representatives of these institutions/districts and, at a later stage, private households should regularly receive reports and comparisons to previous periods and comparisons to other entities. This leads to more awareness and is an incentive to reduce food waste. It does not have to be measured in the same way in all countries, it is sufficient if it is comparable in a respective country.

Rationale/justification

We recommend it because it would broaden awareness among consumers. It would also serve as an incentive to improve and reduce food waste. The results of the recommendation can be measured in the short and long term, providing some motivation to reduce food waste.

Additional notes**RECOMMENDATION 12****A mandatory reporting system for transparency coupled with penalties and rewards**

We recommend establishing a reporting system (especially similar to ISO certification) to set specific standards across the whole value chain including producers, manufacturers, retailers, supermarkets, restaurants, and hotels. It should distinguish between large and small/medium size enterprises (SMEs) based on existing categories to classify company sizes. There should be penalties if standards are violated and rewards if companies overperform. There should be a relative fine system proportional to the gravity of the offense and the size of the company. Rewards should primarily be based on a label system, for example, ABC grades, or potentially financial incentives, especially for SMEs. Independent and external auditors must be tasked with reporting, not the companies. Public authorities at the member-state level (e.g., ministries or regulatory bodies) are in charge to ensure implementation and monitoring. The data should be publicly accessible and enable peer learning. The Commission should have an oversight and coordination function.

Rationale/justification

It is important for transparency purposes to have the data of the labels available and accessible for people who wish for more information than just a label.

Additional notes

RECOMMENDATION 13**EU-wide legislation on the destruction of unsold food products – a peer learning approach across Member States**

It must be ensured that food products are used in different phases before being thrown away. The priority is on avoiding food waste, but if not possible, the following cycle applies: human consumption, animal consumption, biofuel, and composting. The Member States are responsible for the required infrastructure to be in place to enable implementation. The EU sets an overarching goal to reduce food waste by a certain percentage. Member States set national standards so that the EU goal is collectively achieved. Member States can implement either voluntary or mandatory measures for companies to comply with. The reduction needs to be quantifiable. After a pilot phase that focuses on supermarkets, and adjustments based on peer learning, the best practice should be a guideline for all Member States.

Rationale/justification

The French example does not work, so we need a better solution, for example a platform like in Finland, where companies can upload food that would go to waste. A law forbidding food waste needs to be kept general to account for diverging cultures of Member States.

Additional notes**RECOMMENDATION 14****Transparency on food waste for visibility and action**

We recommend that all participants in the food supply chain, except individual households, should have an obligation to measure and report transparently on dealing with food waste and its handling. Further emphasis should also be on the need for new options for data collection as well as including the food loss in the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, differentiated incentives to promote voluntary agreements should follow to support institutions in playing a pioneering role. Also, corrective measures contribute to the importance, geared towards including all participants in the food supply chain (except individual households).

The EU should do a best-practice evaluation of the different Member States about their existing reporting structures and incentives as well as corrective measures. This helps to establish a further embedded framework for the EU to make data more comparable.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because the awareness of existing food waste is the basis to apply further approaches, such as incentives, innovative voluntary agreements, and corrective mechanisms to avoid food waste.

Additional notes

As an example of incentives, an EU-wide labelling technique could be used to benefit from marketing strategies. Another example could be appropriate financial compensation for reducing food waste.

RECOMMENDATION 15**Innovation in packaging and use of packaging when needed**

We recommend investing further in scientific research on innovative and alternative sustainable ways of packaging. This helps to increase the life span, improve the package size to reduce food waste, and ensure better food safety for its transportation. The EU should support this financially and politically through appropriate programs, such as the funding of start-ups and smaller innovating forces. Furthermore, we recommend supporting retailers to sell food without packaging, where it is possible, without compromising food safety.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because we still rely heavily on the packaging, particularly concerning transportation and food safety. Therefore, we believe that supporting innovations (research/ start- ups) in environmentally sound packaging can contribute towards this. On the one hand, adjusting the sizes of packaging of perishable food would reduce food waste, whilst considering the risk of increased packaging waste (whereby research mentioned above, should aim at preventing this). On the other hand, the individual portions should be offered, where one can bring his/her own container (also to reduce food waste, as well as waste of other kinds). If we develop a structure of environmentally friendly packaging and its infrastructure is adapted, ultimately, consumer acceptance can be achieved.

Additional notes

TOPIC BLOCK III – SUPPORTING CONSUMER BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

RECOMMENDATION 16

Broadening the definition of food waste in order to save unharvested food

We recommend that unharvested food should be integrated in the European definition of food waste. We also want farmers to have the possibility to commercialize less-than-perfect but still edible products. To avoid food loss, farmers should get signs which announce that unharvested food may be harvested by private households and NGO's.

This idea must be communicated to two groups:

- to citizens via the campaign that is developed in recommendation 20
- to farmers via the Member States' ministries for agriculture. The latter should implement this recommendation in coordination with local municipalities and producer unions.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because it is unreasonable to waste edible food. Direct harvesting helps recognize the work that farmers do and value the food they produce.

Additional notes

A challenge is that we don't want to blame farmers.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Encouraging adults to take action on food waste as a priority

We recommend that each Member State should implement a program for adults to raise awareness and knowledge about the cost of food waste and the benefits of preventing it at national, regional, and local level.

This should be based on best available data (recommendation 5) to underline the urgency of the problem. It should include apps (recommendation 18), campaigns (recommendation 4 and 20), further education and training for people working in the food industry, in-house training programmes for professionals as well as documentaries and television programs on the topic. Some possibilities could be short ads showing the benefit of reusing food, promote Sunday as leftover day, and create game shows with cooking competitions for young adults to involve the broadcasters.

Informing people, through simple messaging or nudges, about the economic and environmental benefits of not wasting food is important.

A key contributor to the dissemination of information could be the media, especially public service radio stations and television, print media, social media, public institutions, museums, and retailers. Existing EU institutions could develop resources to support Member States (for example, the House of European History).

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because other recommendations deal with children's education, but we also need actions that have an immediate short-term effect on the current buying and cooking generation.

Additional notes

A benefit is that anti-food waste nudges used in supermarkets will balance the marketing that persuades people to buy too much.

RECOMMENDATION 18**Nutritional awareness and sustainable food in primary and secondary schools**

We recommend the inclusion of the topics of sustainable food and nutrition in primary and secondary schools' curricula, either through the creation of new mandatory standalone courses, as they already exist in some countries, and/or their inclusion in existing mandatory subjects. This recommendation aims to increase pupils' awareness of food waste through discussions on socio-economic values, sustainable production and consumption, shopping behaviours, household economics, and practical experiences bringing schools and farms closer together. To make this recommendation happen, there are two preconditions which we expect the EU to enact. Firstly, we need a multi-stakeholder awareness raising campaign to create and increase momentum around the topic (recommendation 20). Secondly, we need to support teachers through trainings, and pedagogical exchanges and materials, capitalising on existing networks and proven best practices. While we acknowledge that these changes can take time to be implemented, it is important to already organise action days or weeks on the topic of food waste in schools, with the mobilisation of different societal actors (recommendation 21).

Rationale/justification

Food waste is the symptom of broader systemic issues which relate to how we produce, buy, and consume food today in Europe, hence why any pedagogical action needs to go beyond food waste, but consider values and desirable futures for production and consumption in Europe. Education remains a national competence and each Member State has different curricula. We acknowledge these differences, while encouraging the EU to promote ambitious actions, with new and/or existing schools subjects such as geography or economics.

Additional notes**RECOMMENDATION 19****Promote and support food sharing applications and platforms connecting consumers with each other**

We recommend that the EU promotes and supports existing applications and platforms, such as Olio or FoodSharing.de. The tools to be promoted must meet some basic criteria and be assessed accordingly: user-friendliness, richness of the database, independence, adaptability to local contexts, and the real impact on curbing food waste. The EU, national and regional authorities need to be proactive in their promotion of most-promising existing tools and support, notably, but not only financially, their development and maintenance through their different research, action, and funding programmes. Public funding should encourage qualitative and neutral information, free of advertisements.

Rationale/justification

There are many applications that connect different actors, from businesses to consumers, or consumers to consumers. Some of these tools might have proven successful to connect consumers with each other, helping them to save food. However, they seem to have a limited geographical coverage or are not known enough by Europeans. We believe it is important for the EU and Member States to actively support technological innovations with high impact, leaving the door open to new ideas and innovations to emerge and to become sustainable in the long term.

Additional notes

RECOMMENDATION 20**Save food, save money: A European campaign against food waste in cooperation with food retailers on four weekends a year**

We recommend that the EU coordinates a campaign focusing on shops selling food (food retailers, supermarkets, hypermarkets, smaller shops) to be deployed in the Member States. This campaign would take place over four weekends each year, and focus on the topic “save food, save money”. It would be up to the different Member States to decide which weekends to pick. The choice of date should be based on the objective to raise awareness on food buying habits (for example around national or cultural celebrations) and seasonality (for example around harvest time). The campaign would be an initiative from the European Union, which would develop a uniform visual design (same logo, colour code, etc.) for all Member States. The campaign would then be implemented at the national level and adapted based on the specificities of each country, their annual calendar, food habits, etc.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because it is important to raise awareness among citizens on food waste. There is only the International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste Reduction, which is unknown among citizens and lost among the large amount of other international days. The new event would be extended to four weekends per year. This would develop the visibility of the issue among European citizens, and the form of repeated weekends through the year would be more useful than a single day. That would also be a way to differentiate the European event from standard international days.

Additional notes

- One benefit of our recommendation is that it would raise awareness among European citizens on food buying, consumption, and seasonality as ways to avoid food waste. Having a campaign organized around four weekends a year would bring regularity in the messages passed on to citizens. Another benefit would be encouraging cooperation with food retailers as part of this campaign and including food retailers in the fight against food waste.
- Among the challenges, there is the issue of how to get food retailers/food outlets involved in the event. Because the objectives of food retailers are to sell as much as possible, some may be reluctant to encourage people to consume less food or adopt different consumption habits. On the other hand, the objective of any shops, including those selling food, is to generate profits, so they might consider the event as a strategy to develop a good image as actors in the fight against food waste. Another challenge concerns the specific characteristics and annual calendar in national Member States in the EU: some countries don't celebrate Christmas, or celebrate it on different dates, and holidays can be different from one country to another.
- Other details on how the recommendation would be implemented:
- Use diversified sources for the campaign against food waste in cooperation with food retailers: traditional media (television, newspapers), social media, use of local influencers, advertising. Take the opportunity of the four weekends to spread a strong Zero Food waste campaign.
- On these weekends, the EU should communicate about the food retailers who already have organized and developed initiatives against food waste. The EU should support these already existing initiatives and communicate on good practices, sharing a positive narrative. We should not highlight shocking messages and focus on positive experiences.
- Organize a follow-up and an evaluation of the 4 weekends to improve it and reach more and more people every year.

RECOMMENDATION 21**“Stop food waste”: A week of food waste awareness at school**

We recommend organizing a theme week in schools on food waste to raise awareness on the topic among young children and teenagers. The week would adopt a form and content depending on the age of the pupils. In primary schools and for younger children, the week should focus on raising awareness through games. The European Commission would create and distribute a toolkit for schools and teachers in all the EU languages on how to raise awareness on food waste at schools and how to discuss and organize activities on this topic in relation with their own teaching subjects. The toolkit would include guidelines with proposed activities to not overburden teachers and should be easily accessible online. Younger pupils would be rewarded by receiving a certificate (with the EU logo). National states would implement the week depending on the functioning of their respective education systems and of their academic calendars. Schools would be free to decide what activities they want to organize during the week, with the help of the toolkit made available for teachers.

Rationale/justification

Children should learn how to value food, how food is produced, and how much time it takes to produce food. It is important to gain this awareness early on. This kind of event can also reach parents through children and teenagers, because pupils tell their parents about their experiences at school when they come home.

Additional notes

- A benefit is that children should learn how to value food, how food is produced, and how much time it takes to produce food. It is important to start early with awareness learning. Another benefit is that this kind of event enable to reach parents through children and teenagers, because scholars tell their parents about their experiences at school when they come home.
- One of the challenges is to not overburden teachers to come up with all the activities and ideas on their own. For this reason, a framework or guidelines with proposed activities is very important to make it possible for all pupils in all schools to benefit from this initiative.

RECOMMENDATION 22

To provide consumers keys to be aware and independent on their impact on food waste and to understand how to process, preserve and reuse a product before and after the date has passed.

(NB. A “use by” date is a safety date after which a product should not be consumed; “best before” indicates the date until which a product keeps its optimal quality)

We recommend the deployment of information tools to enlighten and (re)equip consumers in their ability to judge whether a product is truly expired. To make consumers aware of the use of their food products, we are in favour of better identification of the labelling of the best-before date: same place for each product and larger font size. Furthermore, we want to affix a QR code directly on the product label (the possibility of also using the barcode). What is the purpose of this? To transmit information on the best ways to preserve it, to recognize (by the taste and the smell) if it is still consumable, and to transmit culinary tips to transform the product (example of adapted recipes). The producers are, for us, the best placed to formalize the information available via the QR code. Concerning unlabelled products such as fruits and vegetables, the QR code should be put where the products are sold to avoid unnecessary packaging. For this source of information to be accessible to everyone, we are not betting essentially on digital technology. We also wish that paper communication tools (guides in supermarkets, for example) be made available.

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because, for us, this is a challenge to make consumers responsible in their food management. Completing the information available on a product is a way for consumers to understand the issues around the expiration date. It is also an opportunity to overcome the “misconceptions” or “fear of getting sick” after the expired date. Indeed, we know that producers are cautious with best-before date to protect themselves. In reality, the product can be consumed afterwards. We do not question the importance of indicating a use-by date. Indeed, it remains a key indicator of freshness.

Additional notes

A benefit is that we focus on labelling to inform consumers in the best way possible about the advantages for their wallet as well as for the environment. Our catchphrase summarizes our idea perfectly: “buy reasonably and eat cheaper”. To make known and promote this new source of information to consumers, we propose to deploy a large communication campaign to explain the objective of this new tool.

RECOMMENDATION 23**The implementation of standardized practices at the retail level when promoting to consumers products close to the expiration date.**

We recommend that the purchase of products close to their expiration date be revalued by asking businesses to adopt a strategy for managing and valuing these products for the consumers. Indeed, it is a question of improving the perception by households of these products so that they are not intended for only one part of the population. This strategy is divided into several parts:

- a regulatory implementation part at the European level by creating a section dedicated to these products making them easily accessible and identifiable upon entering the store to promote better consumption practices by all users, regardless of income
- the development of a communication policy highlighting “common sense” and the attractiveness of the products as well as the responsible purchasing approach (promotional overconsumption aspects should not be on the front communication line)
- encouraging retailers to adapt their policy of putting new products close to their expiration date on the shelves at peak times (adapted to the practices of consumers in different European countries).

Rationale/justification

We recommend this because it reinforces an existing policy in many stores and standardizes “good practices” on a European scale. The group is paying particular attention to the beneficial effect of the generalization of these measures, which would change the image around low-priced products (not only available for households but to the whole population).

Additional notes

This recommendation is a way to promote companies’ engagement in sustainable practices. Indeed, it can build consumers’ loyalty. However, there are some challenges in putting this recommendation into practice:

- On the household side: to be more flexible and adapt the weekly menu with the products available
- On the side of professionals: to train the staff and introduce this new policy into practice
- On the side of the general population: to overcome the misconceptions and to change the perceptions of the recipients of these products, certainly at low cost, but which first fights against the unsold goods.

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