



(Food) Waste Not Want Not

Why Food Waste is a big-deal and how to scale it up?



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



Policy Brief of the book
Edited by J. Simanovska and C. Billingham

October
2018



BRĪVĪBAS UN SOLIDARITĀTES FONDS



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POLICY BRIEF

To set out the main messages from the book

“Food waste is fast becoming a sort of new European epidemic. Of course, no deaths or diseases can be directly imputed to it. Yet, with around 88 million tonnes of food wasted annually in the EU, this phenomenon has become so widespread and so worrisome that we, Social-democrats, must take the issue seriously and collectively think of ways to address this trend.”

Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

“Effective action to reduce food waste requires a comprehensive rethink of how we produce, market and consume food at each step in the food supply and consumption chain. This requires a common understanding of the issues at stake and close co-operation between all relevant stakeholders.”

Biljana Borzan, European Parliament’s rapporteur on the initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety

“Food itself cannot be waste so we talk about wasted food instead of food waste. Most (if not at all) times ‘food waste’ is a human action (or lack of action). Changing the way we talk about these issues is one of the pillars of our communication in order to challenge people’s general mindset and ideas on food and waste.” ResursRestaurangen, Sweden

Ten key policy recommendations:

I. Establish a common definition and measurement methodology - the European common definition is well awaited yet an international common standard and common methodology on how to measure food waste is the first step in identifying how to prevent food waste.

II. Raise awareness about how food is produced and how to prevent waste - we need to address our relationship to food and the value it holds. Learning about how to better store food, changing the way we consume it, how to better use leftovers etc. is useful in preventing consumer food waste at retail and household level. Shorter supply-chains and packaging that does not increase food wastage could help this.



- III. More robust legislation** - establish new laws that allow products to be sold or donated easily, with little administrative burden whilst also adhering to food safety regulations.
- IV. National legislation** – the sustainable development goals and the European legislation now need to be transposed into national legislation. Of course each country needs to assess what is most suitable for its own adaptation needs, nonetheless a more coordinated approach would bring more wide-reaching benefits.
- V. Awareness campaigns on ‘best before’ and ‘use by’ dates** – by making people more informed about the difference between these two definitions would offer significant prevention.
- VI. Encourage more action but also transparency** – The introduction of more robust regulation would help ensure better measuring, recording and transparency of data at all stages along the food-chain, from production through to consumption. Action on food waste should be incentivised. This would be good for businesses that act to prevent food waste and also good for consumers and authorities to be able to use the data for analysis and thus help better manage and improve food waste.
- VII. More concrete action from EU and national governments** – the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety has done a significant amount to bring this issue onto the main political agenda but more concrete action in scaling-up the measures would have even higher results. If we are to work towards the 2030 target of reducing food waste by a half, concrete planning and roadmaps should be set up. Food waste as part of the circular economy package is not only something to think about at the end stage of consumption but at all stages of the food-chain. Furthermore local authorities can also commit to better sorting and recycling measures that would decrease food waste at the low-valorisation stage.
- VIII. Coordinated action** – Policies need to be revised to ensure that food waste is not just a side issue but that it is incorporated into all policy areas, bringing it into the more mainstream policy debates. From economic planning, to allow for investment, making best methods of production, storage and transport more widespread, using better technologies and introducing more robust regulation at the retail stage. Incentivising good practices and provide support for initiatives that help reduce food waste would be promising.
- IX. Work together with food safety and hygiene authorities** – in cases where national and local governments have worked together with food safety and hygiene authorities, improved regulation has been introduced to address food waste and thus allowing for new initiatives to be created. Better legal clarification or provisions to encourage donations would be useful.
- X. Establish methodology for best identifying where food waste is occurring and how to best measure it** - At whatever stage in the food production and consumption chain if food waste is being measured, the source of the problem and the way it is measured needs to be identified first before collecting the data.



List of contributors:

Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Charlotte Billingham, Executive Adviser, FEPS

Biljana Borzan, Member of European Parliament, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

Joris Depouillon, FoodWIN, Belgium

Ervins Labanovskis, Freedom and Solidarity Foundation

Hanna Hartikainen, Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)

Paola Hernández Olivan, Mensa Cívica, Spain

Katri Joensuu, Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)

Dace Kavasa, Evolve Ltd Founder, Member of CSR Latvia

Jolita Kruopienė, APINI, Kaunas University of Technology Lithuania

Elke Markey, FoodWIN, Belgium

Harri Moora, Evelin Piirsalu, Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre, Estonia

Monika Raugėvičiūtė, APINI, Kaunas University of Technology Lithuania

Jana Simanovska, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia

Grazia Cioci, Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe

Ernst Stetter, Secretary General, FEPS

Paul Wallner, ResursRestaurangen, Sweden

Jasmien Wildemeersch, FoodWIN, Belgium