



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.C.3/NG/ae

Subject: MAC recommendation on EU-level targets for food waste reduction

Dear Mr. Pastoor,

Thank you for your email of the 30th of March on behalf of the Market Advisory Council¹ concerning proposed EU-Level Targets for Food Waste Reduction.

In your letter, you highlighted the Farm to Fork Strategy adopted by the Commission as part of the [European Green Deal](#)², which puts forward a series of actions to enable the transition to a sustainable EU food system that safeguards food security and ensures access to healthy diets sourced from a healthy planet. Reducing food loss and waste is an integral part of the strategy's Action Plan, which calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal for legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU, by end 2023 and a proposal to revise [EU rules on date marking](#) ('use by' and 'best before' dates), by end 2022. The Commission will also further integrate food loss and waste prevention in other EU policies, investigate and explore ways of preventing food losses at the production stage, and continue to mobilise all players by encouraging the implementation of the [recommendations for action](#)³ of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste.

The revised Waste Framework Directive⁴ adopted on 30 May 2018 requires Member States to reduce food waste at each stage of the food supply chain, monitor food waste

¹ Ref. Ares(2022)2368242

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/document/download/7143f94e-600f-4df5-acef-5b332e7e44ec_en?filename=fs_eu-actions_action_platform_key-rcmnd_en.pdf

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/851/oj?locale=en>

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levels and report back regarding progress made. The legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU will be defined against a baseline for EU food waste levels set following the first EU-wide monitoring of food waste levels by mid-2022. This legal monitoring and reporting obligation is for Member States and not for individual food business operators and is fully compatible with the Food Loss and Waste Protocol⁵.

We welcome your feedback on the policy options that the Commission is considering for the setting of EU food waste reduction targets and we will consider this in the preparation of the legislative proposal. Following a first round of feedback on the Inception Impact Assessment through the *Have your say!* portal⁶, which ended on 29 October 2021, the Commission will launch a public consultation in Q2 2022 to collect the general public's views on the topic, the level of awareness and support towards a binding policy for food waste reduction, the role of the actors and potential challenges.

On the specific recommendations highlighted by MAC for the Commission, it is noteworthy that some of these actions have already been implemented as part of the Circular Economy Action Plan (2015)⁷, such as:

- the elaboration of a common EU methodology to measure food waste consistently⁸, which allows Member States flexibility in choosing their preferred measurement methodologies and clarifies what should be measured as food waste;
- the establishment of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste⁹ (FLW), bringing together all key players from public and private sectors in order to better identify, measure, understand and find solutions to deal with food waste;
- measures to clarify EU legislation related to waste, food and feed and facilitate food donation¹⁰ and use of food no longer intended for human consumption in animal feed¹¹;
- and examining ways to improve the use of date marking by actors in the food chain and its understanding by consumers¹² (on-going work).

⁵ <https://foodlossandwasteprotocol.org/>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13223-Food-waste-reduction-targets_en

⁷ COM(2015) 614 final dated 2/12/2015

⁸ COMMISSION DELEGATED DECISION (EU) 2019/1597 of 3 May 2019 supplementing Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards a common methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of levels of food waste

⁹ Key recommendations for action of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, 2019. https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste_en

¹⁰ EU - Guidelines on food donation, 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/food-donation_en

¹¹ European Commission - [Guidelines for the feed use of food no longer intended for human consumption](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XC0416(01)), 2018. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XC0416\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XC0416(01))

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/date-marking-and-food-waste-prevention_en

The Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) is closely collaborating with other Commission departments, including DG MARE, for the integration of food loss and waste prevention in relevant policies (including on fisheries and aquaculture) and DG MARE participates in the work of the EU Platform on FLW. Synergies are also ensured with the revision of the Regulation on Food Information to Consumers, to make sure that any changes proposed aim to prevent food waste linked to misunderstanding and/or misuse of these dates, while meeting consumers' information needs and not jeopardising food safety.

Consumer food waste is a key area of focus and the EU Platform on FLW has a special sub-group¹³ dedicated to consumer food waste prevention in order to support EU and Platform members' work in this field. Together with the Joint Research Centre, the Commission also runs the European Consumer Food Waste Forum¹⁴, a project that aims to gather data and identify a variety of evidence-based, practical solutions to reduce food waste at the consumer level, including household and food services.

The Commission also recognises that food waste prevention requires actions across the food supply chain and takes note of the importance of waste recovery, for example the MAC advice on the importance of the recovery of shellfish waste for carbon sequestration, and the several food waste reduction actions already undertaken by the fishery and aquaculture value chain, which are further assisting in the recovery of useable waste. We warmly encourage you to share these initiatives with a wider network of stakeholders active in food loss and waste prevention via the EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub¹⁵.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Pedro Reis Santos (secretary@marketac.eu); Anne-Laure Gassin
(SANTE/DDG2/D1).

¹³https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste/thematic-sub-groups/consumer-food-waste-prevention_en

¹⁴https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/european-consumer-food-waste-forum_en

¹⁵https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu-food-loss-waste-prevention-hub/