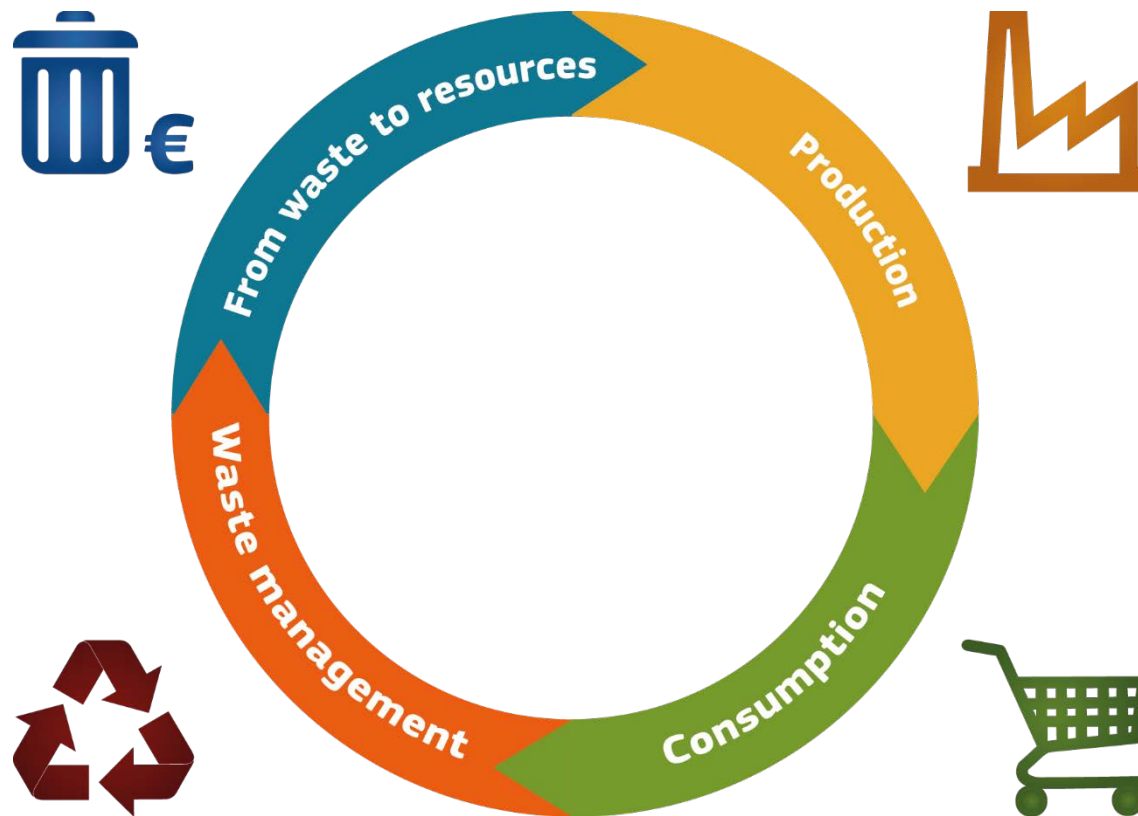# EU action to prevent food losses and food waste

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"Ensemble contre le gaspillage alimentaire",
Luxembourg, 27 October 2016

Food waste prevention: integral part of Circular Economy Package (2015)

EU co-operation in fighting food waste

Key challenges for Commission are to ensure that:

- **all actors** are involved, from farm to fork

- **EU action** complements/adds value to Member State initiatives

- **learning and best practice** are shared effectively, including international experience

> ⇨ **Precondition: ensure food and feed safety**
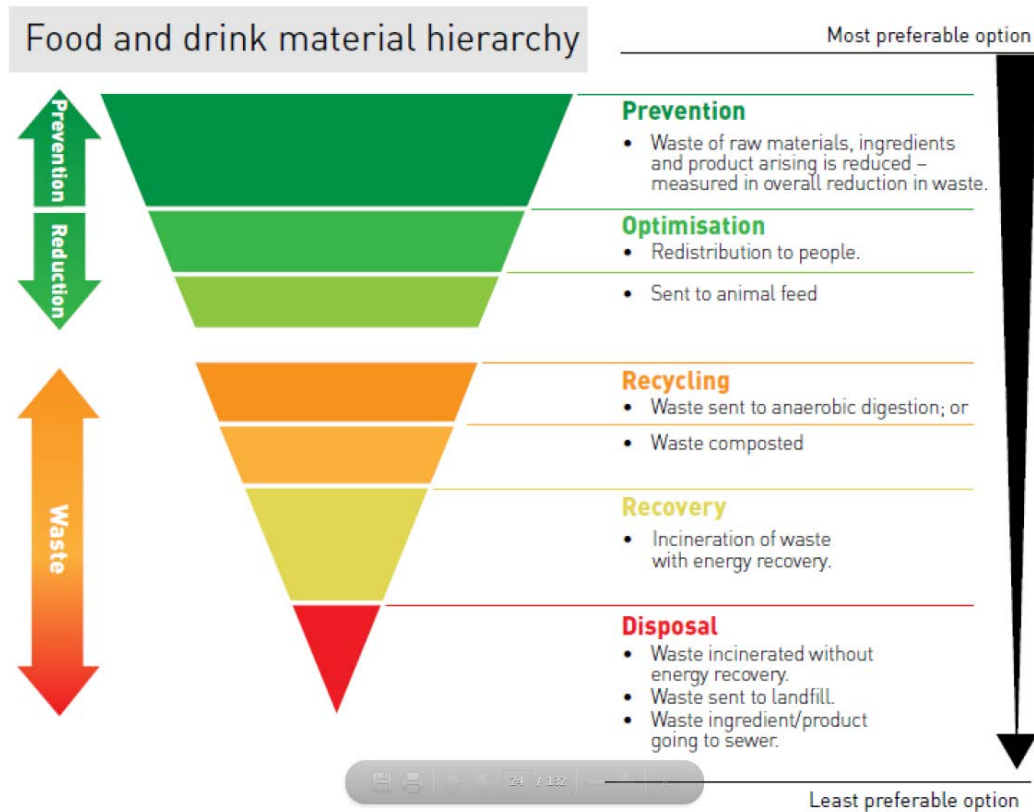> prevention of food waste cannot jeopardise human or animal health

Food waste prevention

- **<u>Overall aim</u>**: Reach <u>Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to halve food waste by 2030</u> at retail and consumer level and reduce food losses along the food production and supply chain.

- <u>Food waste in the EU*</u>:
  - around 88 million tonnes of food are wasted every year (173 kg/pcc)
  - Estimated cost: 143 billion €
  - 20% of food produced ends up as waste
  - 70% of EU food waste: consumers, retail and food service sectors
  - 30% of EU food waste: processing and production sectors

*FUSIONS 2015 (2012 data)

Food and drink material hierarchy

Figure 2 An example food and drink material hierarchy, used to scope waste prevention.

Fight Food Waste:
no impact on safety of the food and feed chain

- Measure and monitor food waste

- EU Platform on food waste prevention

- EU guidelines to facilitate food donation

- Optimise safe use of food in feed

- Promote better understanding and use of date marking

- Raise awareness and engagement
  http://ec.europa.eu/stop food waste

Waste legislation proposal: reinforces food waste prevention in EU waste policy

- Proposal to <u>revise Waste Framework Directive</u> *(COM(2015)595 final)* reflects commitment to SDG 12.3 and requires MS to:

  - **reduce food waste generation at each stage in the food supply chain** (primary production, processing/manufacturing, retail/other food distribution, restaurants and food services, households)
  - **Monitor** food waste levels, based on **common EU methodology**, and **report** (on a biennial basis).

- **Monitoring** obligations will **support assessment of progress towards SDG** 12.3 and exchange of best practice informed by an evidence base.

- **Feed materials excluded from scope of WFD** to facilitate use of former foodstuffs in feed.

Guiding principles on monitoring

- Fit existing EU regulatory framework
- Focus on resource efficiency of whole food supply chain – not only on food understood as "ready to eat"
- Simple to use
- Using actual measurement vs modelling (as far as possible)
- Use to the extent possible existing reporting and policy frameworks (e.g. ESTAT waste reporting, Waste Prevention Programmes)
- Not re-invent the wheel (benefit from experience with FUSIONS, FLW Protocol, MS monitoring programmes etc...)
- Streamline efforts (EU/global)

EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste

Aims to support all actors in:

- monitoring progress towards SDG 12.3
- defining measures needed to prevent food waste
- fostering inter-sectorial cooperation and
- sharing best practice.

Members: Member States/EFTA countries, EU bodies and international organisations and actors in the food value chain. (37 private sector organisations selected following public call for applications)

First meeting: 29 November 2016
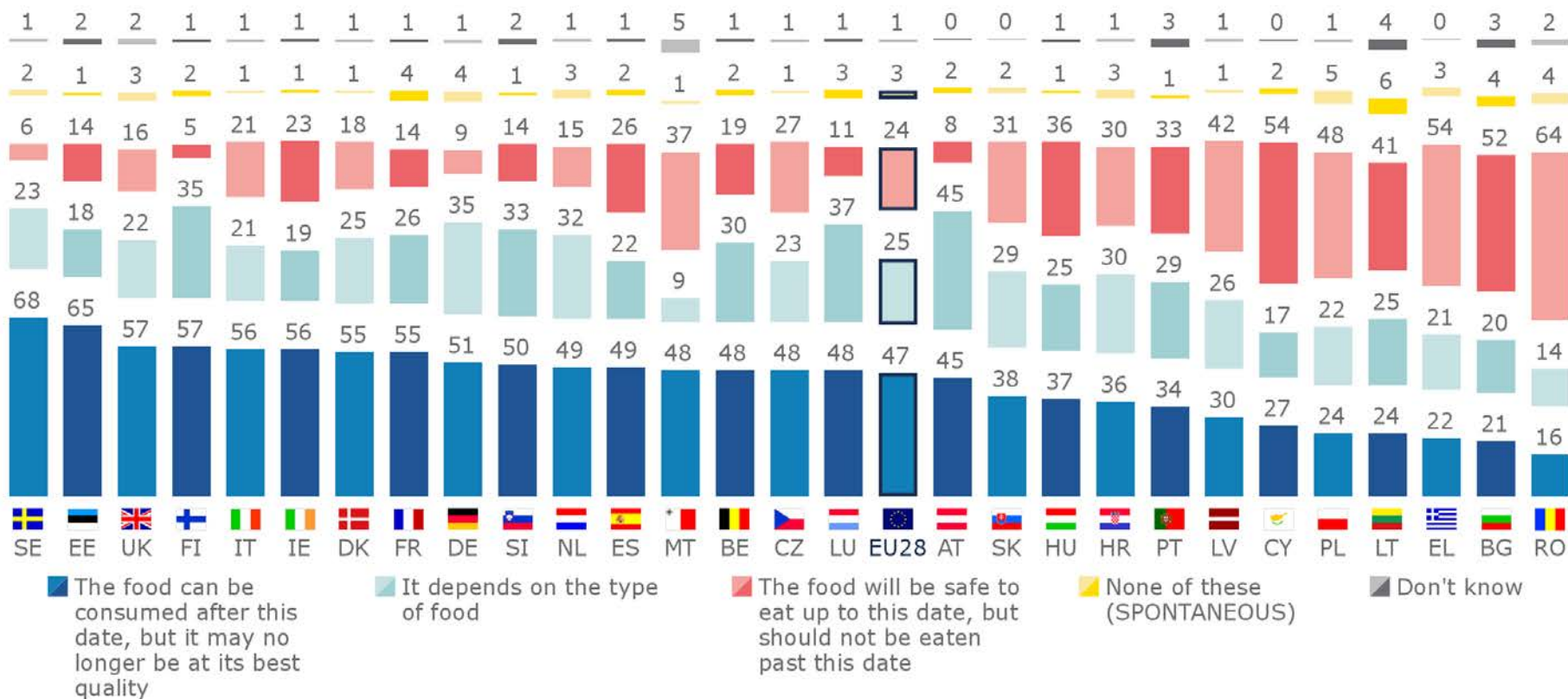
Facilitate food donations

- Commission to develop **EU-wide food donation guidelines** for food donors and food banks eg:
  - Roles & responsibilities (food safety, hygiene, traceability...)
  - VAT regime and food donations..
  - ⇨ Guidelines to focus on **issues to be addressed at EU level** (1st draft – new "food waste" Platform 2016)
  - ⇨ **Resource section** on Commission "food waste" website (national guidelines, recent studies and reports)

- Commission to implement **Pilot Project on food redistribution**: further research on practices/barriers in EU MS; support dissemination of future EU guidelines

Food waste and date marking:
key findings from Flash EB (Oct 2015)

- **Misunderstanding of meaning** of "use by" and "best before" contributes to household food waste.

- **Majority** of consumers (58%) **state they always look** at "use by" and "best before" dates when shopping and preparing meals.

- Yet, **less than 1 in 2 understand the meaning** of date marking (47% - "best before"; 40% - "use by")

- **Important country differences** in level of consumer interest, understanding and use of date marking

    ⇨**need for targeted information and educational initiatives**

Correct answers to 'best before' vary from 68% in Sweden to 16% in Romania

Q What do you think "best before" on a food product actually means? I am going to read out some options, please select the one that best applies. (%)

Legend:
- The food can be consumed after this date, but it may no longer be at its best quality
- It depends on the type of food
- The food will be safe to eat up to this date, but should not be eaten past this date
- None of these (SPONTANEOUS)
- Don't know

Date marking: promote better understanding and use

- **Assess/address information needs** (consumers and other actors):
  - Consider development of guidance document on establishment of date marking

- **Explore with industry** and **MS authorities** possible opportunities for food waste prevention:
  - FBOs: eg type and consistency of practices regarding date marking?
  - MS: use of date marking in regulating food supply chain

- Consider opportunities to **simplify date labelling** rules:
  - Possible extension of list of products exempt from "best before" labelling?
  - Possible modification of terminology ("best before")

⇨ Recent **findings from consumer research and new study on date marking practices** will help inform possible policy developments and communications initiatives

New study on date marking practices

Aim: investigate how <u>food business operators</u> and <u>national competent authorities</u> understand and utilise date marking and possible impact of practices on food waste.

Main phases:

1) Desk research to identify (if/where possible) main foods contributing to food waste in the EU MS and possible link with date marking
2) Market research to map date marking practices in selected food categories
3) Qualitative research (in-depth interviews) with MS and food business operators

Timing: 2016 – 2017

Tackling food waste in the EU

Commitment and co-ordinated action is required

Thank you