



EUROPEAN FOOD BANKS
FEDERATION (FEBA)

ASSESSMENT OF FEBA MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022





Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the spread of **COVID-19 as a global pandemic**.¹ Since its onset in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the **interrelationships between the disease emergence and spread and its multifaceted impact on European and global economies** constituting a challenge for the livelihoods of citizens. Amongst other aspects, COVID-19 has hit the centre of the global food system, causing highly impactful disruptions that have determined ripple effects throughout all actors and segments of the agri-food system, from farm to fork. In the European Union before the start of the pandemic, 92.4 million people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, slightly down from 2018,² while, according to the new released report by Eurostat in 2021 the number increased up to 95.4 million, meaning that 1 European citizen out of 5 was experiencing risk of poverty, severe material and social deprivation.³

At the end of February 2022, the **Russian invasion of Ukraine has upended the fragile economic recovery from the pandemic**. The war has not only undermined Ukrainian territorial integrity, bringing war back to the European continent and causing a major humanitarian crisis, but has also exacted heavy tolls on the economies of the Russian Federation and Ukraine as well as on the neighbouring economies in Central Asia and Europe, including the European Union. A **skyrocketing inflation** and

soaring energy, fuel, fertilizers, and food prices which are provoking **rising costs of living, a lack of availability or an increase in prices of raw materials for food production** resulting in a **shortage of food availability** or a **critical issue with regard to food affordability**, especially for the most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the first half of 2022 has been deeply affected by some **radical climatic and environmental changes** which have had a major impact on some agricultural products and have increasingly affected food systems.

Starting from 2020, the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) has been actively engaged in periodically **monitoring and assessing the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting repercussions on the daily operations of its members across Europe**. The findings have been summarised in a series of **five reports released in the course of 2020 and 2021**.

Read FEBA's COVID-19 reports here



¹ World Health Organization, [WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19](#), 11 March 2020.

² Eurostat, [Over 20% of EU population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2019](#), 16 October 2020.

³ Eurostat, [Over 1 in 5 at risk of poverty or social exclusion](#), 15 September 2022.



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With the aim of continuing a regular assessment, at the beginning of September 2022 FEBA circulated a **new survey to its members to assess the impact of COVID-19 in the period 1 July – 31 December 2021 as well as the impact of external factors such as COVID-19, the Ukraine crisis, inflation growth, increase of food prices, food availability, and climate change (flooding, heat waves, wildfires) among others in the period 1 January – 30 June 2022 on its members.**

In this report, FEBA presents the aggregated **results of the survey filled in by 29 out of 30 members** of the organisation.⁴ The results are presented in two chapters: the first chapter refers to the period of 1 July – 31 December 2021 while the second reflects the period 1 January – 30 June 2022. FEBA is enormously grateful to its members for providing detailed insights, as well as to partners and supporters for fostering and supporting the continuity of Food Banks' daily activities.

Within this framework, FEBA envisaged to take a snapshot and assess the everyday needs of its members to provide a description of the first and most visible consequences that the events of 2022 have brought, as comprehensively as possible.

Key findings:

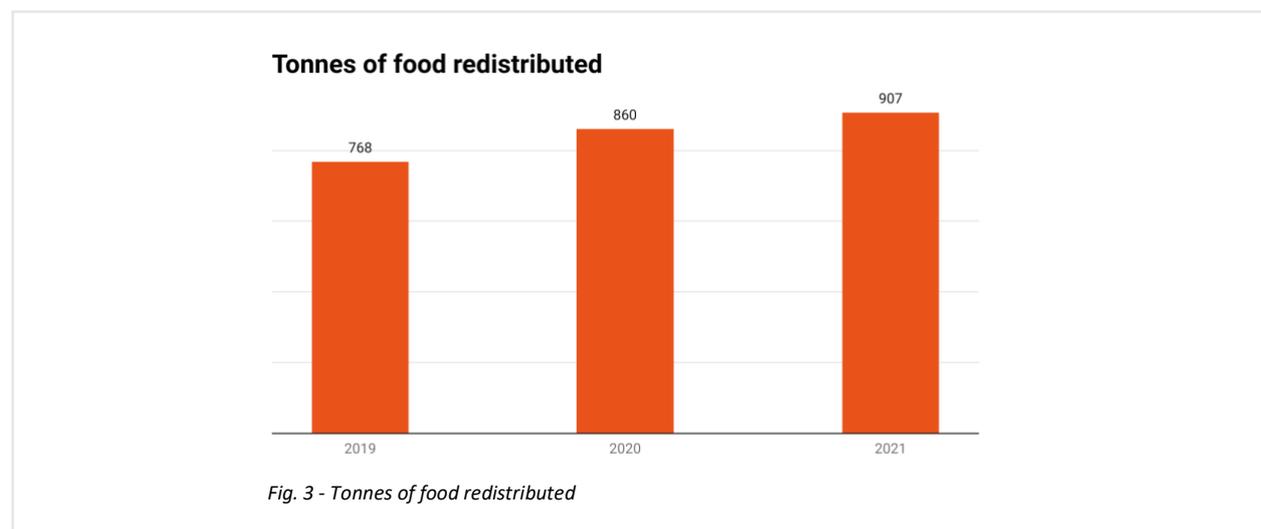
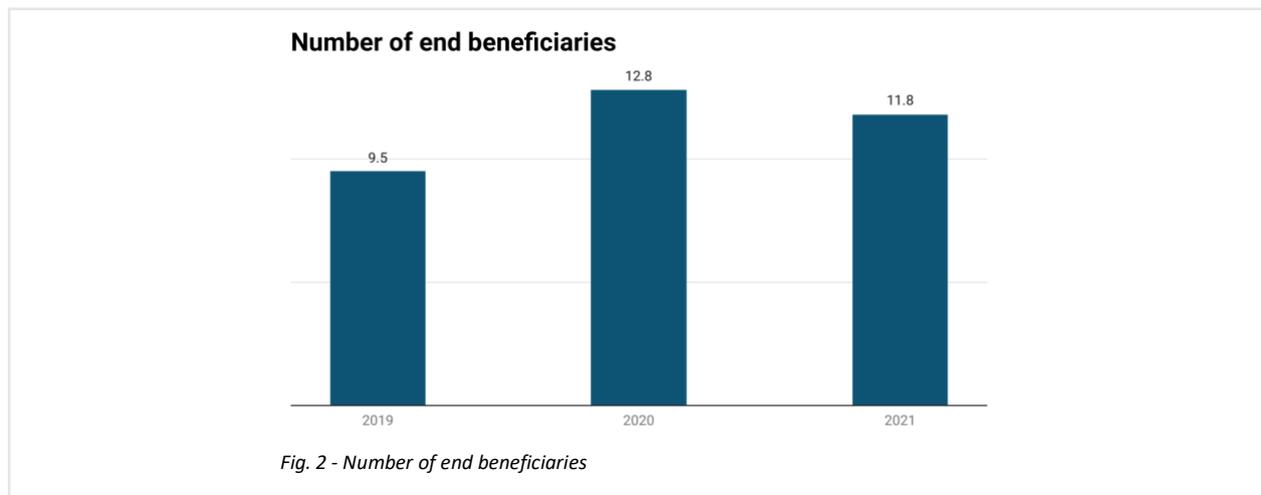
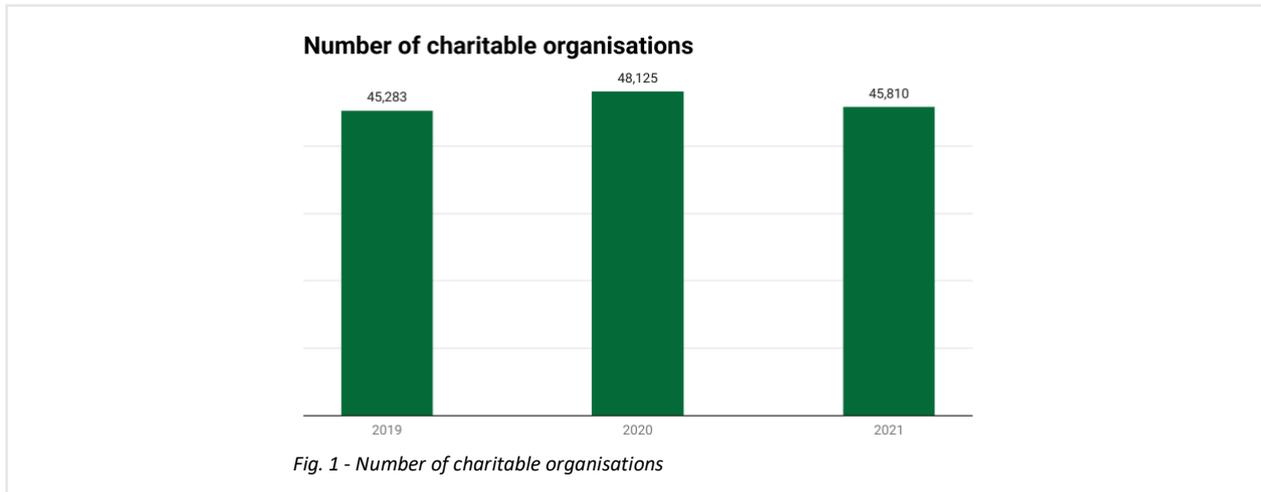
- In 2021, FEBA Members redistributed **907,280 tonnes of food (+18% compared to 2019 as pre-COVID benchmark, Fig. 3)** to support **45,810 charitable organisations (Fig. 1)** helping **11.8 million people in need (+24% increase compared to 2019 as pre-COVID benchmark, Fig. 2).**
- In the period July to December 2021, **FEBA Members increasingly adapted their activities** to a pandemic-induced new normal.
- At the beginning of 2022, the **trend in quantities of redistributed food** by FEBA Members has been **deeply affected by the Ukraine crisis**, rising in Eastern Europe as a result of exceptional donations in response to the war in Ukraine to support refugees, while quantities of redistributed food are decreasing in Western Europe.
- **Two out of the three FEBA Members (66%) have experienced an increase in the amount of food requested by charities.**
- More than 80% of respondents identified the **largest group of final beneficiaries as families with children and single parents**, followed by **elderly people, and refugees from Ukraine.**

⁴ FEBA Members in: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, and United Kingdom.



ASSESSMENT OF FEBA MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES
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Evolution of FEBA Member's activities 2019 - 2021





ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19 IMPACT IN THE PERIOD 1 JULY – 31 DECEMBER 2021

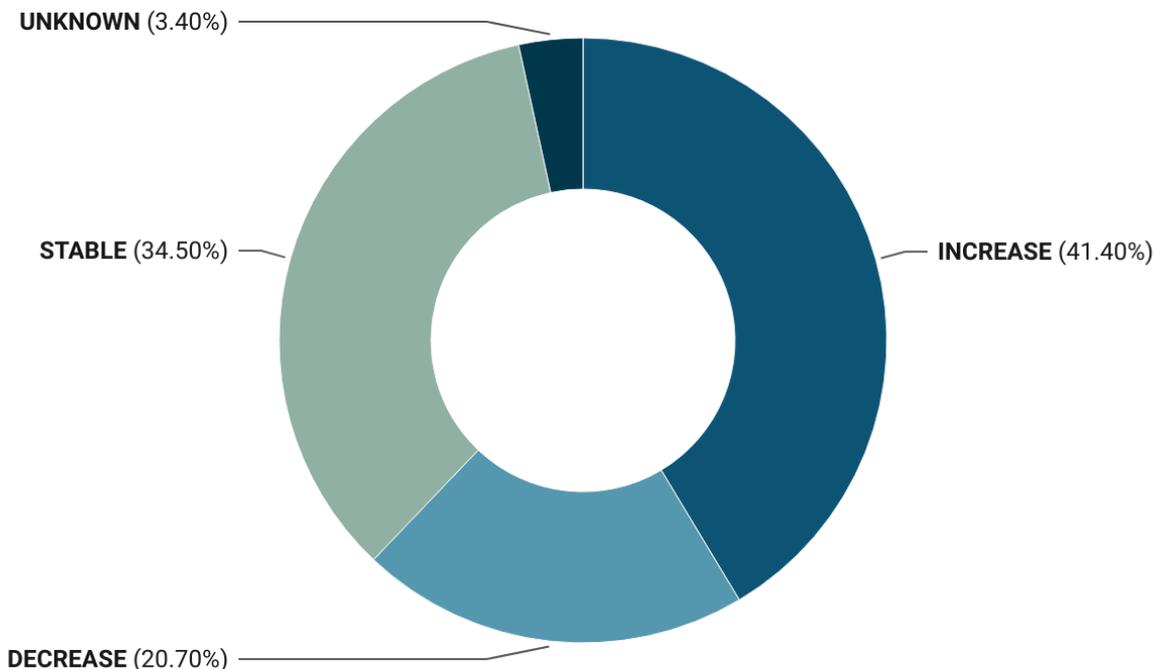
Analysing the results concerning the period July to December 2021, about **40% of FEBA Members experienced an increase in the amount of food donated, surplus food recovered, food stemming from EU and/or national programmes, and food purchased** (Fig. 4). **35% of respondents saw substantial stability**, while only **21%** experienced a decrease when, compared to the same period in 2020.

Regarding the trends that have had the greatest impact on FEBA Members'

activities since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, **more than 50%** of the respondents stated that they had entered into **new collaborations with partners**, while just under half (48%) initiated a **dialogue with local or national authorities**. **One in four members** took advantage of the pandemic to **digitise their activities** and introduced new solutions for data collection, IT systems, or the management of Food Bank operations.

Trend of FOOD IN

In the period July 2021 - December 2021 compared to July 2020 - December 2020



FEBA defines FOOD IN as the total volume of food recovered, donated, purchased, and received through EU programmes.

Chart: FEBA • Source: European Food Banks Federation • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 4 - Trend of FOOD IN

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL FACTORS

IN THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY – 30 JUNE 2022

Regarding the second period which was assessed (from 1 January to 30 June 2022), FEBA Members report that their operations have been impacted by various factors (*Fig. 5*). **More than half** of respondents state that they have been **affected by the Russian military invasion of Ukraine** and the resulting geopolitical and socio-economic consequences provoking spiralling food and

energy prices. About **50%** of respondents identify the **steady rise in inflation**, which started as early as 2021,⁵ as having strong repercussions on their daily activities. On the other hand, climate change and rising fertiliser costs do not seem to have a significant impact on the majority of Food Banks involved in the survey.



⁵ Eurostat, [Inflation in the euro area](#), 16 September 2022.



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Factors impacting daily activities in 2022

■ I don't know
 ■ No impact
 ■ Very low impact
 ■ Low impact
 ■ Medium impact
 ■ High impact
 ■ Very high impact

Ukraine war



COVID-19



Climate change (flooding, wild fires, heat waves)



Lack of diversification of national food supply / Food import dependency



Rising cost of fertilizers



Inflation



Rising costs (energy bills, fuel, etc.)



Increase of food prices



Availability of food



Chart: FEBA • Source: European Food Banks Federation • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 5 - Factors impacting daily activities in 2022



ASSESSMENT OF FEBA MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES
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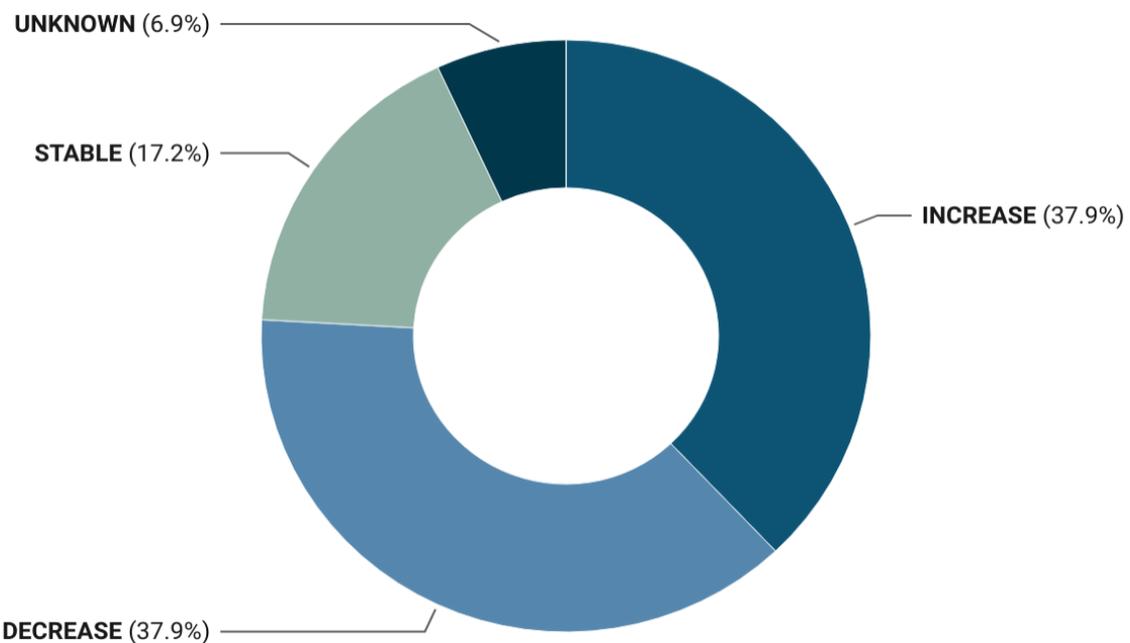
Despite these external factors influencing Food Banks' daily routine, when considering the **amount of food donated, surplus food recovered, food stemming from EU and/or national programmes, and food purchased** in the period 1 January - 30 June 2022 (Fig. 6), the percentage of members who saw an increasing trend remains almost unchanged (from 41.4% to 37.9%), while **the percentage of members who experienced a decreasing trend rose** (from 20.7% to 37.9%), almost doubled.⁶ Looking at the

data of individual FEBA Members, a large proportion of those who saw an increase are from the countries **surrounding Ukraine**. On the contrary, members from Central and Mediterranean European countries seem to be the ones who experienced decreasing volumes of food available.

It is estimated that **over 237,600 tonnes of food were redistributed** by Food Banks belonging to the FEBA network in the period from January to June 2022.

Trend of FOOD IN

In the period January 2022 - June 2022 compared to January 2021 - June 2021



FEBA defines FOOD IN as the total volume of food recovered, donated, purchased, and received through EU programmes.

Chart: FEBA • Source: European Food Banks Federation • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 6 - Trend of FOOD IN

⁶ Data not available from France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Malta.



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Among those Food Banks who declare an **increase**, some report that volumes have augmented due to **exceptional donations in response to the war in Ukraine to support refugees**, but that in the last months of the semester, this trend has already **started to decline** and is negatively impacting the daily activities. For some Food Banks **EU and/or national programmes for food aid have provided increased volumes of food** for redistribution to the most deprived, however others point out that **volumes of fruit and vegetables dropped** due to **crop failure caused by climatic events** such as droughts, and **food donations from food business operators are falling** due to problems related to costs and availability of raw materials.

Among those Food Banks who report a **decrease**, it is also noted that some commercial initiatives to combat food waste have contributed to a reduction in the amount of surplus food donated to Food Banks. However, respondents also state that the decrease is more attributable to a **reduction in surplus food recovered** from food business operators, due to rising inflation, and the surging production costs they are facing. Some FEBA Members, nonetheless, have also seen a decrease due

to producers' more careful and responsible behaviour concerning food waste prevention, which is becoming so prominent that food donations are declining. In light of these contractions, around 15% of respondents are developing closer partnerships and continue to carry out advocacy activities to promote food donation.

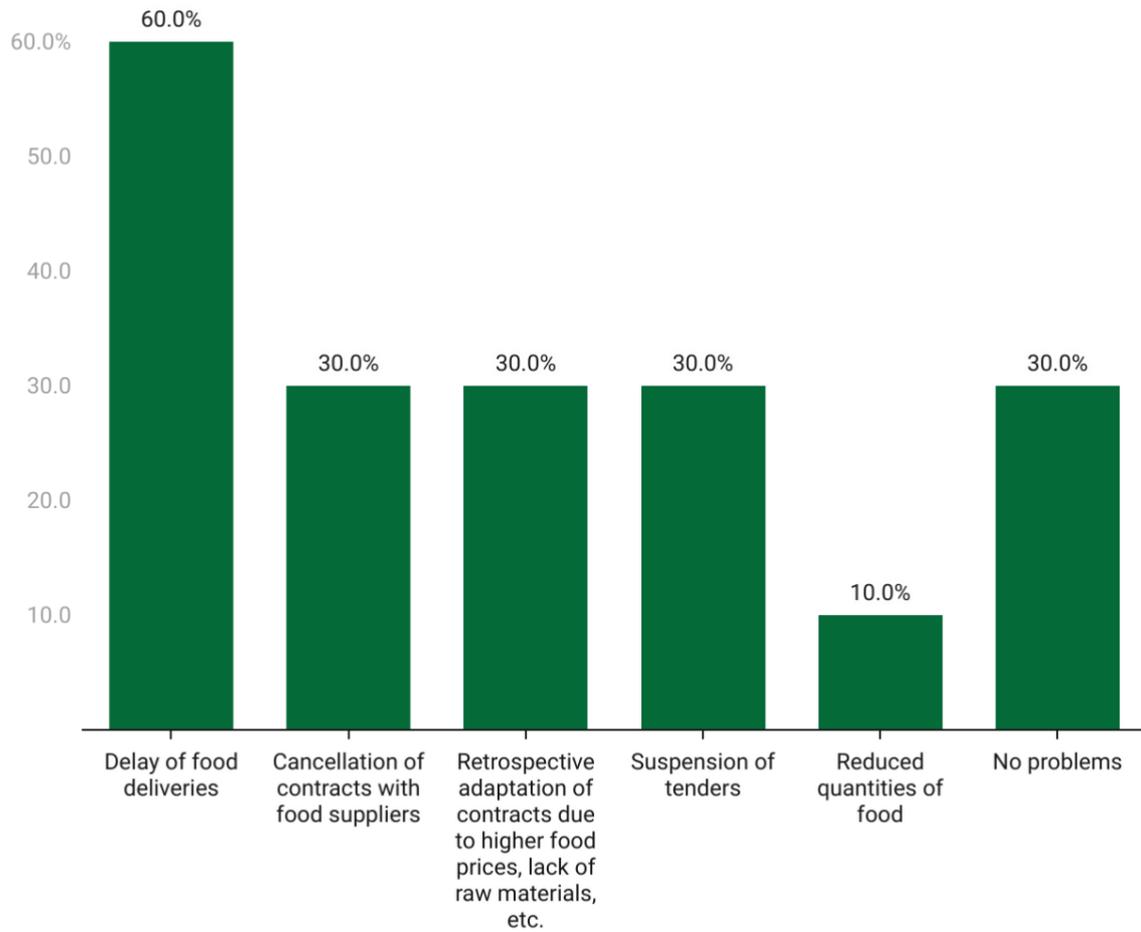
EU programmes to provide material aid to the most deprived such as the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)** and **REACT-EU** deserve special consideration. In the period from January to June 2022, 10 out of 30 FEBA Members received food and basic products from these programmes (*Fig. 7*). Among these, 7 experienced problems of versatile nature. Two-thirds of responders reported **delays in the delivery of food and basic products**, impacting the food volume available for redistribution. 30% of those who affirmed difficulties state retroactive price increases in existing contracts due to rising prices and lack of raw materials. Moreover, cancellations of existing contracts or suspensions of tenders posed challenges to the affected three Food Banks.



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Problems experienced in relation to EU programmes

Among FEBA Members receiving food through EU programmes



FEBA Members receiving food from EU programmes: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain.

Chart: FEBA • Source: European Food Banks Federation • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 7 - Problems experienced in relation to EU programmes

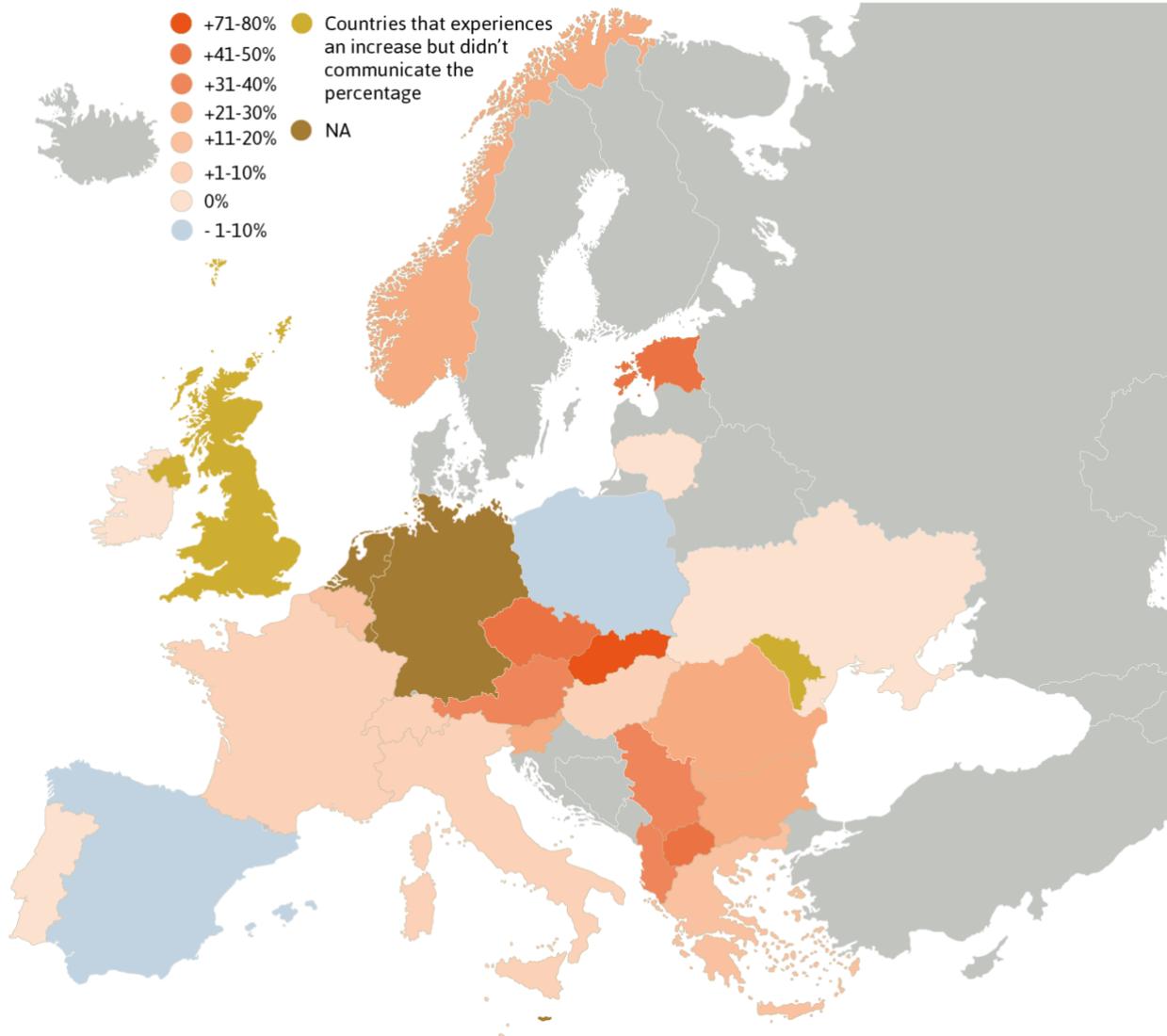


Fig. 8 - Change of food demand

The map (Fig. 8) shows the percentage change with respect to food quantities that charities requested from FEBA Members. While **7% of respondents report a decrease**, **two out of the three FEBA Members (66%)** have experienced an **increase in the amount of food requested** by the charities they serve or directly by people in need. This trend does not appear to have a geographical distribution and indeed seems to be an established trend in much of Europe. Among those who report that the trend is stable,

some point out that in the last weeks of the period under consideration (January - June 2022) there were increases that may have consolidated during the summer and will additionally augment towards the end of the year.

On the recipient side of the food redistributed by FEBA Members or charities



(Fig. 9),⁷ more than 80% report that the largest group of final beneficiaries are **family with children** and **single parents**. However, also the share of respondent indicating **elderly people and refugees from Ukraine** as persons benefiting from food redistribution (around 75% and over 60%,

respectively) is deemed significant. Among the unspecified categories (“Others”), internally displaced people, the disabled, the homeless, minorities, women experiencing violence, fragile victims of homo- and transphobia, and ex-prisoners are named.

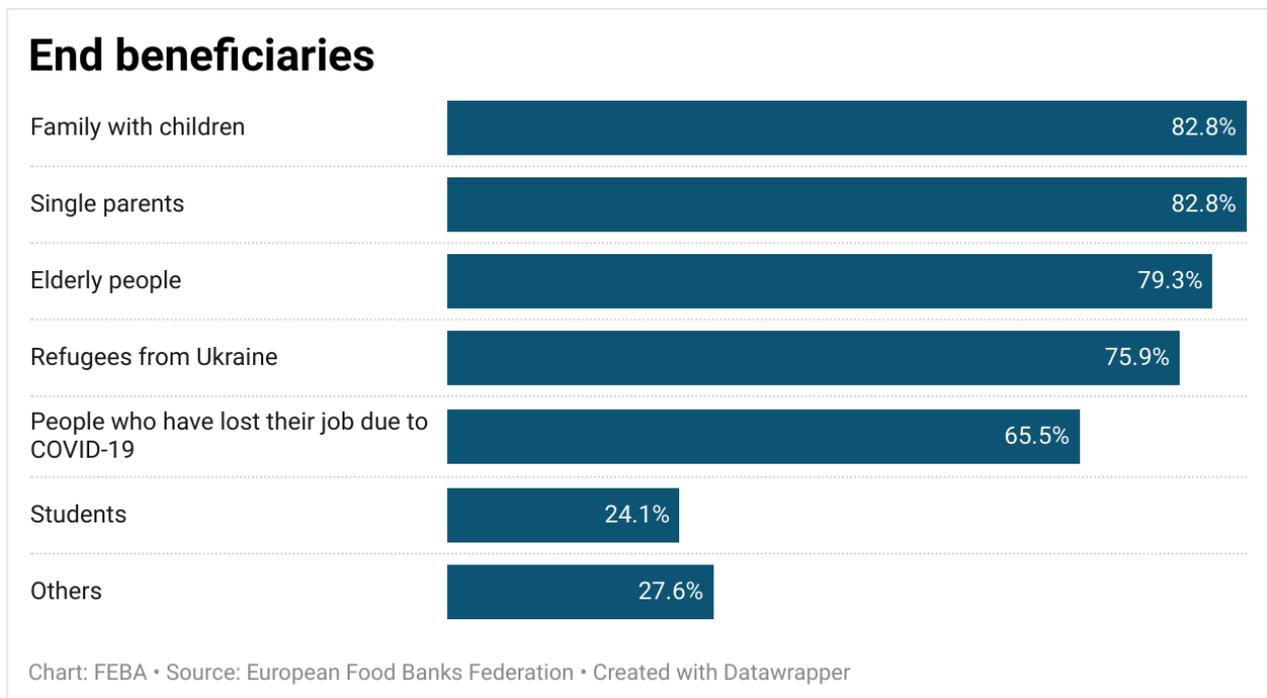


Fig. 9 - End beneficiaries

Another issue addressed by the survey concerns the assessment of **measures taken by national governments and European institutions** on the daily activities of Food Banks. Among those who were able to analyse the actual impact, almost 20% of **Food Banks**

consider them to be **unsatisfactory or without impact**, and another 20% reported that **no measures** had been taken. Only **15%** rated the measures taken as **generally sufficient** and another **15%** considered them to be **fully effective**.

⁷ In some countries such as Estonia, Germany, and the Netherlands, FEBA Members redistribute food not only to other charitable organisations but also provide food directly to end beneficiaries.



Impact of measures adopted by national governments and EU institutions on FEBA Members' activities



Only 21 FEBA Members out of 29 respondents assessed the impact

Chart: FEBA • Source: European Food Banks Federation • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 10 - Impact of measures adopted by national governments and EU institutions on FEBA Members' activities

Going into the details of the measures taken (Fig. 10), **amendments to food safety legislation** specifically at EU level as well as to the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)** are reported as having a **positive impact** by some members while others point out that there were no specific measures to facilitate the work of Food Banks or make it less costly, for example by financing the extra costs incurred in relation to COVID-19 hygiene rules.

Finally, it is reported that after the official termination of the FEAD, the implementation of the subsequent European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) has not yet started in some Member States due to bureaucratic delays.

Considering the day-to-day needs of Food Banks, **all FEBA Members (70% as an absolute necessity and 30% as important) report that the greatest need is food suitable for redistribution**, which emphasises that the provision of food is of utmost importance considering the rising costs of living. Subsequently, **50%** state that **financial support** for Food Banks is a concrete requirement for the conduct of their daily activities. Not to be overlooked is the fact that **one in three** respondents pinpoint the fostering of **transport and logistics capacity** as an absolute necessity, as well as the application of **favourable legislative changes**.



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Some respondents indicate that they desire more collaboration and exchange within the FEBA network and innovation regarding food waste prevention.

In the last part of the survey, FEBA asked its members to indicate the level of consideration that might be given to certain **activities in the short to medium term**. More than two respondents out of three (**72%**) outline that they will be engaged in the **search for new food sources** and a similar share (**69%**) believes they should be working at national level to **monitor and scout for new funding opportunities**. Just over half (**52%**) of respondents considers the **promotion of policies and legislation to prevent food loss and waste and to foster food donation** at EU level as crucial in the medium term. Besides that, about **40%** of respondents stress that it is vital to

collaborate with other national NGOs and stakeholders, and to contribute with ideas and proposals to the policy-making processes at national level.

All respondents identify as **main goal the redistribution of more food than today**. In addition to that, **80%** of respondents aim at **reinforcing corporate partnerships** to raise food and funds and **75%** plan to engage in **promoting the collaboration with public authorities and other non-profit organisations** (Fig. 11). Unspecified responses ('Other') include the willingness to process large quantities of fruits and vegetables into soups, sauces, and juices, but also to expand the network to other regions and train the new Food Banks. Moreover, advocacy work to harmonise EU guidance and legislation on food redistribution is deemed as an important objective.

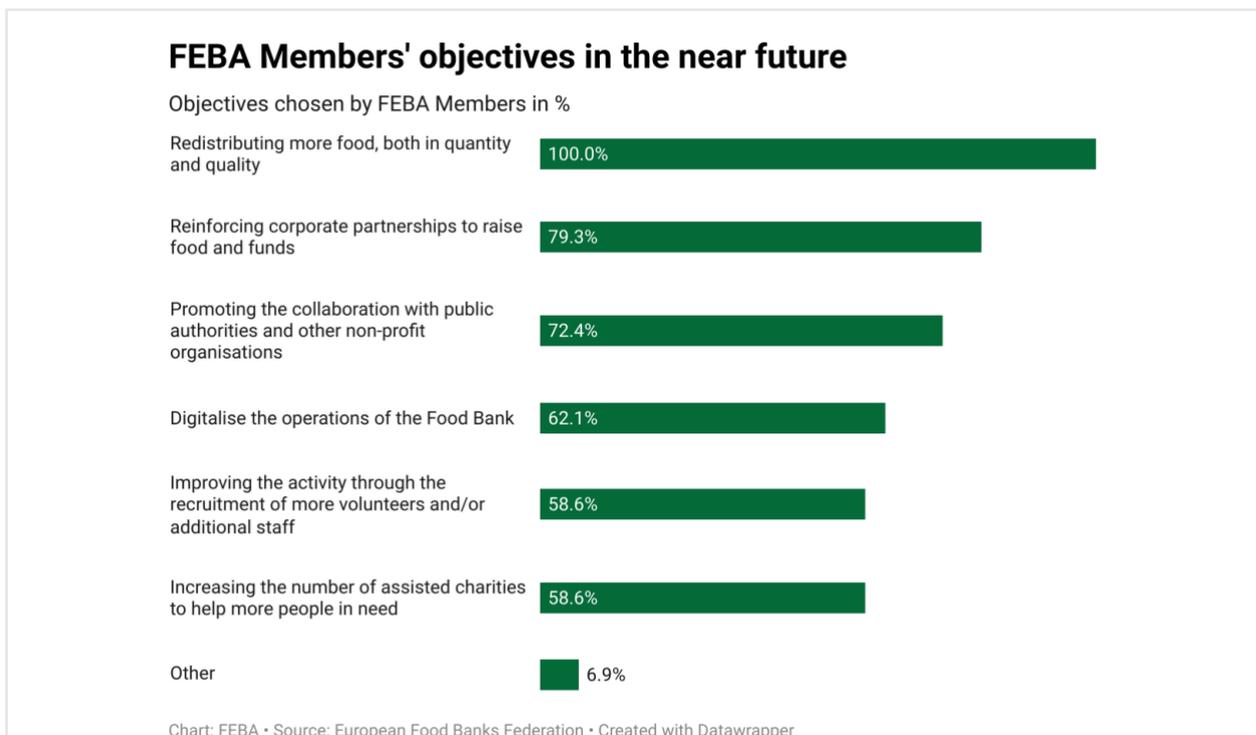


Fig. 11 - FEBA Members' objectives in the near future



EUROPEAN FOOD BANKS FEDERATION ASBL – FEBA
Chaussée de Louvain 775 • Brussels 1140 • Belgium
+ 32 2 538 94 50 • info@eurofoodbank.org



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