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## EU Platform on food losses and food waste

The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste is a group of experts gathered by the European Commission to provide input and share best practices for preventing food waste.

FEBA is a member of the Food loss and waste monitoring sub-group which met on 11 May 2023. The results of several research projects on food waste monitoring were presented to this group composed of representatives from a broad array of organisations, ranging from NGOs to academics and business associations. Among others, a new index has been developed, allowing hotels to estimate more precisely how much food must be prepared for each guest. Read the documents of the meeting [here](#).

On 25 May, a meeting of the Action and implementation sub-group of the platform took place. Participants exchanged on the valorisation of food waste into feed for animals. There is a particularly interesting potential at the transformation level where most of the waste is technically safe to eat but has no possibility of being marketed to consumers (food crumbs for example). Read the documents of the meeting [here](#).

# Commission revises marketing standards of agri-food products

In late May, the Commission put forward a [proposal](#) to amend the existing marketing standards applicable to certain fruits and vegetables, including apples, kiwis, tomatoes, and lettuce.

Currently, products which do not comply with aesthetic standards may not be sold, even if they are safe.

Historically, these rules had been put in place to harmonise the production and to simplify comparison between two products. Due to the regulation, buyers should be able to compare two products only by looking at the price, not at the quality. While this is considered useful by many stakeholders in the industry, it results in large quantities of food waste.

For example, a 2018 study [1] estimated that EU marketing standards resulted in an average waste ranging from 3% for tomatoes to 24% for lettuce, compared to a zero-waste scenario. In order to tackle the problem of food waste, the new rules would introduce the possibility to sell these products, if it is done locally and directly to the consumer.

The proposal also simplifies labelling requirements for food destined for donations. Operators will be exempted from listing certain information unrelated to food safety, thus reducing red tape and making donations easier.

As usual, the Commission published the draft version of the text on its [website](#) in order to receive feedback. Anyone can give feedback, from business associations to citizens.

FEBA contributed by suggesting that donations of “ugly products” to Food Banks or other food redistribution organisations should be fostered as well. Disposing of perfectly edible food which simply does not meet aesthetic standards is a waste of resources.

The proposal still has to go through the Council and Parliament to be approved.

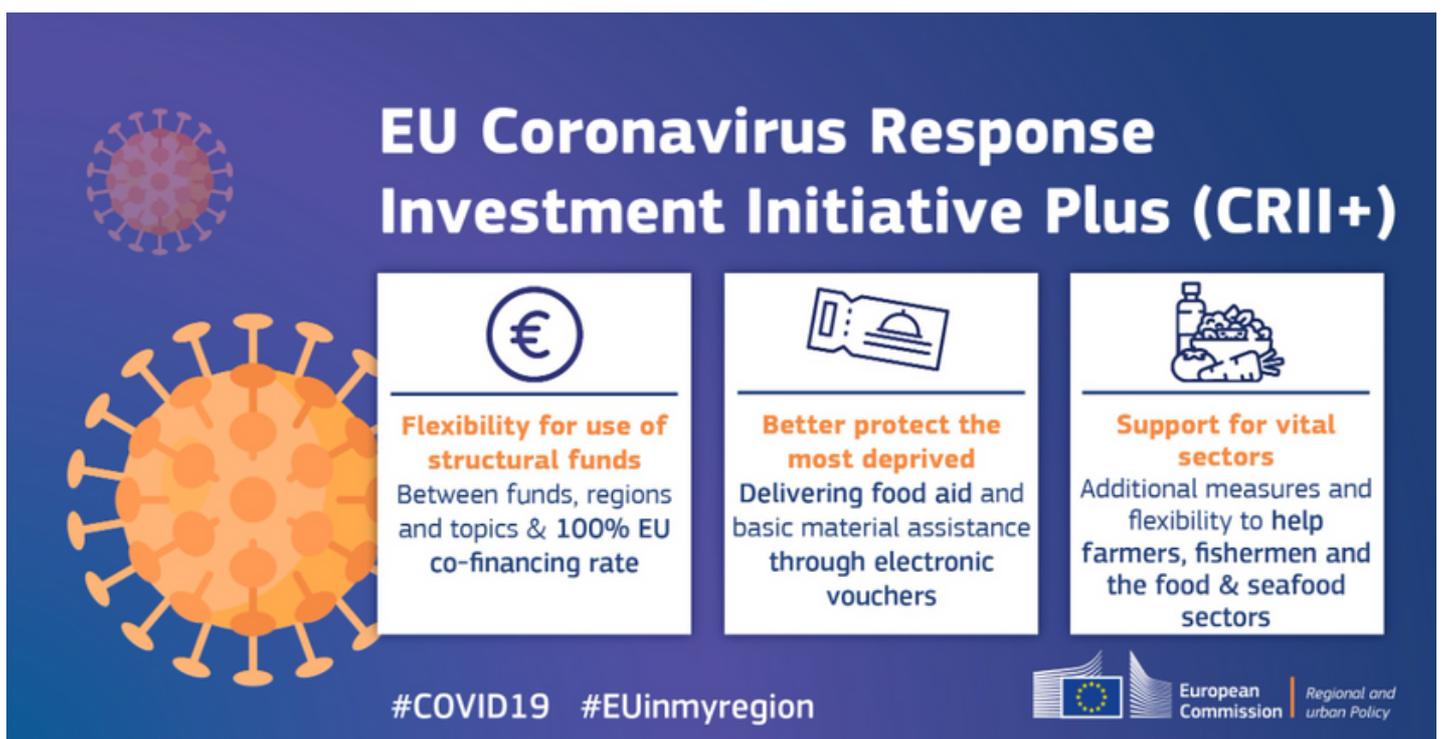


# Evaluation of the support provided by ESF and FEAD under the CRII

In March and April 2020, the European Commission introduced additional flexibility in the use of ESF and FEAD to allow Member States to tackle the pandemic-induced socio-economic crisis more effectively. For example, it allowed transfers of funds from the cohesion policy to ESF and FEAD and postponed reporting deadlines. The Commission is currently analysing the consequences of the two initiatives (known as CRII and CRII+) to evaluate their relevance and effectiveness.

A preliminary report was published on CRII and CRII+, focusing on administrative adaptations by Member States and managing authorities to the new rules. Overall, it seems that the initiatives were appreciated and that the cost of understanding new procedures was outweighed by their benefits. During the pandemic, social programmes under ESF and FEAD were widened in scope to benefit a larger part of the population, and the opportunity to shift funds from the cohesion policy was widely used to cover the extra costs. The report also emphasised the usefulness of ad-hoc interinstitutional groups to coordinate action and avoid costly duplication of programmes.

At its current stage, the assessment of CRII and CRII+ is very positive and might become a useful source of inspiration for the next EU-wide crisis.



**EU Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII+)**

- 

**Flexibility for use of structural funds**  
Between funds, regions and topics & 100% EU co-financing rate
- 

**Better protect the most deprived**  
Delivering food aid and basic material assistance through electronic vouchers
- 

**Support for vital sectors**  
Additional measures and flexibility to help farmers, fishermen and the food & seafood sectors

#COVID19 #EUinmyregion

European Commission | Regional and urban Policy

# Report on ensuring food security and long-term resilience of the EU agriculture

On 10 May 2023, the Committee on Agricultural and Rural Development of the European Parliament adopted a report on ensuring food security and long-term resilience of EU agriculture in response to the vulnerabilities of European food systems revealed by the COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine.

The 56-pages document lays out recommendations ranging from the One Health principle to plant proteins and Artificial Intelligence. On food waste, the document reiterates the Parliament's call for binding food waste reduction targets and encourages the European Commission to promote food waste awareness campaigns.



# MEPs push to dedicate 2024 as European Year of Food Sustainability

According to a letter circulated by the news website Euractiv, a coalition of MEPs is suggesting to the Commission that the next year should be dedicated to food sustainability.

The necessity of a resilient food system and the fragility of the current food chain have been made particularly visible by the war in Ukraine and high food prices inflation. Making next year the European Year of Food Sustainability would highlight the importance of the EU in this domain, notably through the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP).

Most of the signatories are members of the European Food Forum: an independent, politically-led, non-partisan forum led and governed by our elected Members of the European Parliament that aims to promote open dialogue on sustainable food systems among policymakers, food supply chain actors, civil society organizations, research and academia, and other public institutions.

Every year, the European Commission chooses a theme on which to raise awareness and the decision is usually made public in September.



# The making of a European Social Union: The case of food banks and the right to minimum income protection

EuSocialCit, a research group on European Social Citizenship, published a [working paper](#) titled “The making of a European Social Union: The case of food banks and the right to minimum income protection”. Scholars from the university of Antwerp conducted case studies in Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Spain to scrutinise the extent to which FEAD funds are geared towards poor Member States with greater social needs and the importance of food aid in general, and FEAD in particular, to supplement insufficient minimum income protection for the poor. Moreover, they investigated how food aid is embedded in and supported by (welfare) state institutions and how important FEAD accompanying measures are to strengthen individual power resources.

Among their findings, they noticed that FEAD spending over the 2014-2020 period is positively correlated with the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. On the other hand, richer Member States spent more European funds dedicated to material deprivation compared to their poverty gap (i.e. the amount of money needed to lift its population out of poverty) in May and June 2022.

Richer Member States spent less (per person) on FEAD and ESF. However, the monetary value of European food assistance plays a bigger role in addressing the gap between the actual income of the poorest and the poverty line, set at 60% of the median European income.

The authors further emphasise that despite national variations, FEAD assistance consistently played an important role in fulfilling the needs of its beneficiaries.

## EuSocialCit

European Social Citizenship

H2020 research project on the state and future of social rights and European social citizenship

# SME Connect conference: The Role of SMEs in Addressing Food Security

SME connect is an organisation aiming to represent small and medium companies in the EU, advocating for the interest of its members, usually national federations of SMEs. On 7 June 2023, they organised an event on food security including MEPs and representatives from the European Commission as well as the private and the non-profit sectors.

COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, and the subsequent social-economic crisis have made clear the vulnerability of European food systems. As highlighted by Romanian MEP Daniel Buda, food security has two dimensions: food must be produced in sufficient quantity, but it must also be made readily available and affordable to consumers. It has been proven that food prices have a considerable impact on eating and shopping habits. This phenomenon is exactly what is currently being observed, with reduced consumer demand for food, especially for nutritious, high-quality products. SMEs have an important role to play in allowing food to reach consumers.



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