



President Jean-Claude Juncker
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

22 July 2015

Dear President Juncker

Food waste: a proposal by national parliaments to the European Commission

The 16 Chairpersons of committees of national parliaments of the European Union, who have signed this letter, collectively make this proposal to the European Commission. Our aim is to invite the Commission, when tabling a new circular economy package, to adopt a strategic approach to the reduction of food waste within the EU. This proposal was initiated by the United Kingdom House of Lords.

As well as inviting you to adopt the approach to food waste set out in the proposal in the new Circular Economy package, we hope that this initiative will establish a new and closer political dialogue between national parliaments and the European Commission. Such a dialogue, often referred to as a 'Green Card', will allow national parliaments to contribute positively and constructively to the development of policies at EU level.

At the outset of your Presidency, you made a commitment to the role of national parliaments which was sincerely welcomed by Member States. We believe that this new form of dialogue reflects the spirit of your commitment, and will help national parliaments to engage in policy development upstream, working with the Commission more closely than ever before.

We emphasise that we do not seek to infringe upon the Commission's right of initiative, but to complement it; nor do we seek to challenge the existing role of the European Parliament, or the duties of the co-legislators in agreeing legislation. But we ask, given that 16 national parliaments and chambers have come together in support of this proposal, that the Commission should give it due weight, and respond appropriately.

In the present case, we would welcome a response ahead of the publication of Commissioner Vella's proposed circular economy package, and ask also that our proposal be acknowledged and assessed within that package.

Yours sincerely,
Tim Boswell

Lord Boswell of Aynho
Chairman of the House of Lords European Union Committee

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Introduction

1. It has been estimated that 89 million tonnes of food are wasted each year in the EU, a figure which could rise to approximately 126 million tonnes by 2020 if no action is taken. The global carbon footprint of wasted food has been estimated as more than twice the total greenhouse gas emissions of all road transportation in the US in 2010.
2. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 19 January 2012 on how to avoid food waste, which recommended that the European Commission take practical measures towards halving food waste by 2025. The Commission, in its Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, in 2011, recommended that disposal of edible food waste should be halved by 2020. At that stage, the Commission also promised a Communication on Sustainable Food, which was due to be published in 2014. A public consultation on the topic was held in summer 2013. A summary of the responses was subsequently published.¹ Those responding were clear that there is an important EU role in preventing and reducing food waste.
3. In July 2014, the circular economy package was proposed, including an aspirational food waste target. Member States were to develop national food-waste prevention strategies and to endeavour to ensure that food waste in the manufacturing, retail/distribution, food service/hospitality sectors and households was reduced by at least 30% by 2025.² This proposal was formally withdrawn by the new Commission, with the intention of tabling a revised proposal by the end of 2015.
4. Tackling food waste is a multi-faceted challenge. Some excellent work is being undertaken at national level, and some collaborative work between EU Member States, but there is substantial room for improvement. An overarching strategy – in the form of the Communication on Sustainable Food – was promised, but never delivered, by the previous Commission. In the light of an increasingly interconnected and international food industry, an EU-level strategy could help to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling this issue.

Recommendation

5. We call on the European Commission, when tabling a new circular economy package, to adopt a strategic approach to food-waste reduction, including the following five elements:
 - i. **EU Food Donation Guidelines** for food donors and food banks. In line with the waste hierarchy, unsold food should – in the first instance – be re-distributed for charitable purposes. Guidelines, which would take into

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/food.htm>

² An Impact Assessment was published in September 2014 on the aspects of the circular economy proposal addressing food waste (SWD(2014)207)

account the work of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, might cover compliance with relevant hygiene and labelling legislation and co-operation between Member States, businesses and charities in order to identify and deliver food re-distribution initiatives;

- ii. An **EU co-ordination mechanism** to support the sharing of best practice between Member States on food waste prevention, reduction and management strategies, including research and innovation, promoting high value use of food waste and practical ways to encourage consumers and industry to prevent and reduce food waste;
- iii. European Commission **monitoring of the business-to-business cross-border food supply chain**, following the welcome establishment of the cross-sector Supply Chain Initiative,³ with the objectives of avoiding unfair practices that lead to the wastage of food and of encouraging an integrated approach throughout the supply chain to prevent and reduce food waste;
- iv. A European Commission **Recommendation on the definition of food waste and on data collection**, building on the work of the EU-wide project, FUSIONS (Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimising Waste Prevention Strategies) in the area of definitions in particular;⁴ and
- v. Establishment of a **horizontal working group within the Commission** to assess the consideration of food waste within policy making across the Commission.

³ <http://www.supplychaininitiative.eu/>

⁴ FUSIONS, *Definitional Framework for Food Waste*, 3 July 2014: <http://www.eu-fusions.org/index.php/publications>

List of signatories

Bulgaria

- Mr Svetlen Tanchev, Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds, National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria

Croatia

- Mr Daniel Mondekar, Chairman, European Affairs Committee, Croatian Parliament

Cyprus

- Averof Neofytou, Chairman, House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus

Czech Republic

- Mr Ondřej Benešík, Chairman of the Committee for European Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies

France

- Ms Danielle Auroi, Chairman, European Affairs Committee, Assemblée Nationale
- Jean Bizet, Chairman, European Affairs Committee, Sénat

Hungary

- Mr Richárd Hörcsik, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Hungarian National Assembly

Italy

- Mr Vannino Chiti, Chairman, EU Committee, Senate of the Italian Republic

Latvia

- Ms Lolita Čigāne, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima

Lithuania

- Mr Gediminas Kirkilas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Seimas

Luxembourg

- Marc Angel, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Cooperation and Immigration, Chamber of Deputies

Malta

- Hon. Luciano Busuttil, Chairman, Foreign and European Affairs Committee, House of Representatives

The Netherlands

- Ms Roos Vermeij, Chair, Economic Affairs Committee, Tweede Kamer

Portugal

- Mr Paulo Mota Pinto, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the Assembleia da República

Slovakia

- Mr Lubos Blaha, Chairman of the Committee for European Affairs of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

United Kingdom

- Lord Boswell of Aynho, Chairman of the House of Lords European Union Committee, House of Lords