



12 February 2024

Joint letter

Food waste reduction targets in the revision of the EU Waste Framework Directive must align with the Sustainable Development Goals

Dear Member States,

We hope this letter finds you well. We, the undersigned civil society organisations, are writing to express our collective concern about the low ambition of the targets for food waste reduction, as proposed in the ongoing revision of the [EU Waste Framework Directive](#).

The food we waste has far-reaching economic, social, and environmental consequences. [Eurostat data](#) shows that over 58 million metric tonnes of food waste (131 kg per capita) are generated annually in the EU. The associated market value is estimated at 132 billion euros, and the European Commission's [Joint Research Centre \(JRC\) estimated](#) that food waste accounts for about 16% of total greenhouse gas emissions from the EU food system. A less wasteful approach to the production and consumption of food would also save an estimated [4.7 million hectares](#) of agricultural land that could be used to produce more food domestically to improve food security, restore nature for carbon sequestration, and improve biodiversity.

We commend the European Commission for its commitment to addressing this issue through the Waste Framework Directive. However, more ambitious targets are essential to tackle the magnitude of the food waste challenge effectively and to respect the commitments made in the 2018 revision of the Waste Framework Directive and under Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 in 2015. [Champions 12.3](#) recommend that SDG 12.3 be interpreted as a 50% reduction target of all food waste from farm to fork by 2030, including primary production.

We call on you to honour this commitment and to support:

- Introducing legally binding targets for all EU member states to collectively achieve a 50% reduction in EU food loss and waste by 2030 – including a 50% reduction for primary production, manufacturing, catering, retail, and household sectors within the scope of the delegated decision on EU food waste measurement; and
- Launching a review of expanding the scope of food waste measurement and targets by EU member states to include food left unharvested or used on farms at primary production (currently excluded under the delegated decision).

These demands have already received support from a broad range of over 50 civil society and business organisations from 22 EU countries in this [joint-statement](#).

We urge you to reject any watering down of the targets by, e.g., delaying the baseline and/or target year, making the targets non-binding, changing the definition of food waste, or disregarding the waste hierarchy.

The Council of the European Union should take a proactive stance in advocating for reduction targets that align with SGD 12.3 and provide support for the outlined key points in the revision of the Waste Framework Directive. Annex A to this letter includes suggestions for concrete amendments to the Commission's proposal in this regard.



Achieving these targets is ambitious yet feasible, as demonstrated by the examples listed in Annex B. Member states have a ten-year timeframe, from 2020 to 2030, to achieve the targets, and an earlier reference year may be used in some cases. Over the past nine years since committing to meet SDG 12.3, many member states have already made substantial progress towards meeting targets.

By adopting these recommendations, the Council can demonstrate leadership in advancing a circular economy, fostering sustainable development, and contributing to the achievement of the European Union's biodiversity and climate goals.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to the Council playing a pivotal role in shaping a more sustainable and resilient future for our communities and the planet.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing the challenges of food waste, and we remain at your disposal for further collaboration on this crucial issue.

Sincerely,

The members of the Prevent Waste Coalition on Food Waste



ANNEX A:

During the negotiations in the European Council, we propose to:

Amend Article 9a, Paragraph 4, of the WFD proposal with the following text:

"4. Member States shall take the necessary and appropriate measures to achieve, by 31 December 2030, the following food waste reduction targets at national level:

Reduce the generation of food waste per capita, jointly in primary production, processing and manufacturing, retail and other distribution of food, in restaurants and food services and in households, by 50 % in comparison to the amount generated in comparison to the 2020-2022 average."

Introduce a new Article 9a Paragraph 3a:

"3a. The Commission shall adopt a delegated act by 30 June 2025 to lay out the methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of food waste at primary production as currently excluded by Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597, including food intended for human consumption that is left unharvested or used on the farm at primary production.

Support Article 9a Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7



ANNEX B

Examples of food waste reduction show that attaining targets in line with SDG 12.3 is possible

While raising targets will challenge all societal actors, multiple case studies show that ambitious targets are reachable.

Countries and cities:

- In the [Netherlands](#), the ongoing national food waste activation campaign contributed to a significant reduction of food waste in Dutch households: a reduction of 17% compared to 2016 and 30% compared to 2013.
- [Denmark's](#) concerted action by the government and businesses to reduce food waste across the whole supply chain saw levels of food waste in retail/wholesale and food service fall by 13 % and 11 % per year, respectively, between 2014 and 2018.
- [Milan – Local Food Waste Hubs](#) recover and redistribute meals, reducing city-wide food loss and waste by 30%.

Processing:

- [The Kellogg Company's](#) global manufacturing operations reduced its food waste tonnage by 17 % relative to total food handled between 2016 and 2019, equal to an annual reduction of 5.6 %.
- By the end of 2021, [Campbell Canada](#) had reduced its food waste by 36% since 2017, equal to an annual reduction of 9 %.
- By the end of 2022, [Unilever](#) had reduced food waste per tonne of food handled by 17% versus 2019.
- At its growing, packing, and processing sites in Spain and the UK, [G's Fresh](#) achieved a 43% reduction in food waste between 2017/18 and 2019/20, equal to over 21% reduction per year and over 20,000 tonnes food waste reduced.

Retail:

- The French multinational retail and wholesaling corporation [Carrefour](#) achieved food waste reduction of 28.7 % between 2016 and 2020, equal to about 7 % reduction per year.
- [Tesco](#) claims to have reduced food waste in their operations by 45% since 2016/17, well progressing towards the ambition to halve food waste by 2025.
- [Aldi UK](#) achieved a 57% reduction in food waste since 2017 in its inaugural sustainability report in Great Britain, equal to about 10 % reduction per year.
- [Ahold Delhaize](#) reduced food waste by 33% in 2023, compared to its 2016 baseline, equal to about 5 % reduction per year.

Food services:

- [IKEA](#) restaurants managed to reduce 52% of food waste between 2016 and 2022.
- The [JRC report \(2023\)](#) "Tools, best practises, and recommendations to reduce consumer food waste - a compendium" shows the levels of observed reductions for different measures applied in food services.



For example, the implementation of nudges that specifically target consumer food waste in contexts such as collective catering for companies, school, or university canteens led to reduced food waste quantities of up to 40 %.

Households:

- The [JRC report \(2023\)](#) "Tools, best practises, and recommendations to reduce consumer food waste - a compendium" shows the levels of observed reduction for different measures applied at the consumer level, e.g., a 15% reduction in waste quantities in canteen sites was registered from a multischool project due to the implementation of classroom education programmes.