



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from: General Secretariat
to: Delegations

Subject: Food loss and waste
Request from the Hungarian delegation

Delegations will find in Annex a document submitted by the Hungarian delegation to be presented under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") at its session on 15 July 2013.

Food loss and waste

Food security has been a priority for many years for decision makers and the relevant international organisations, especially since the food crisis in 2008-2009. According to the 2012 report (The State of Food Insecurity in the World) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) almost 870 million people suffer from chronic malnutrition worldwide. As a result of the expected increase of the world population to 9 billion by 2050, agricultural production should increase by 60 %, despite the adverse impacts of climate change and the fact that the natural resources have become scarce. To achieve this goal, it is not enough to increase food production, but it is also necessary to decrease food loss and waste.

According to FAO, one third of the food quantity destined for human consumption in the food supply chain is lost or wasted. It means 1.3 billion tons each year. Two-thirds of this quantity is perishable food. This phenomenon is different in its nature and extent in various segments of the food supply chain. FAO studies revealed that food losses occur in early phases (production, post-harvest and primary processing) of the food supply chain, while food waste is experienced mainly in the end of the chain (retail and final consumption). In developing countries, the fundamental problem is food loss: up to 40 per cent of the crop can be lost after harvesting, in the lack of adequate storage capacity and primary processing. In developed countries, food waste is rather a major problem and it can be seen mainly in the retail and consumption phases of the food chain. The issue of food losses and wastes is the theme of the World Food Day on the 16th of October 2013.

The effects of food loss and waste can be categorised into three groups: economic or financial (the value of products wasted, the costs of resources wasted), environmental (problem of waste management, lost environmental/natural resources) and social effects (moral problems: starving people vs. food waste).

Several international initiatives (ThinkEatSave, Save Food) have been launched in this subject by international organisations (e.g. FAO, UNEP) and other partners. In order to analyse the actual situation properly and to take adequate measures it is necessary to have reliable and comparable data. Uniform terminology and definitions are needed in order to create common methodology. It should be mentioned in this respect that a remarkable initiative was launched in August 2012 by the European Union within the framework of the “FUSIONS” (Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimising waste prevention Strategies) project. In addition, awareness raising efforts made by EU Commission (DG SANCO) to inform consumers about responsible consumption are also important tools to decrease food waste.

The new framework of the Common Agricultural Policy has recently been approved and it has a clear link with global food security and with the issue of food loss and waste. An impact assessment should be considered, which highlights the impacts of the CAP reform (and other factors) on food production and food security in the EU and in the world. According to estimates, each year 179 kilograms of food per person is wasted in the EU. Hence, it is necessary to deal with this problem in the years of economic and financial crisis.

In our opinion, it is appropriate to raise this issue during the meeting of the Agricultural and Fisheries Council. Ministers responsible for agricultural and food issues should have the possibility to express their views concerning this important subject.

We kindly ask the European Commission to examine the above-mentioned problem, prepare a detailed analysis of the situation and put forward recommendations in order to decrease food loss and waste in the EU. Furthermore, it is essential to elaborate plans for future co-operations with the relevant international organisations and other stakeholders so that we have a clear picture of the global situation and tackle it by means of adequate measures.