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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste
- Information from the Commission on the state of play

Delegations will find in Annex an information note received from the Commission on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 12-13 December 2016.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL – 12-13 DECEMBER 2016

WRITTEN INFORMATION FROM THE COMMISSION SERVICES

EU PLATFORM ON FOOD LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE: STATE-OF-PLAY

The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, established as part of the Circular Economy Action Plan, spearheads EU efforts to fight food waste from farm to fork. The Platform brings together both public and private interests in order to foster cooperation amongst all key players in the food value chain and help accelerate the EU's progress towards meeting the global Sustainable Development Goal of halving food waste by 2030.

Dedicated to food waste prevention, the Platform is composed of 70 member organisations: 33 public entities (all Member States, together with EU bodies and international organisations) and 37 actors representing the food value chain including consumer and other non-governmental organisations, selected through an open call for applications.

At its first meeting on 29 November 2016, participants welcomed the establishment of the Platform as a unique forum for elaborating concrete solutions to address particular challenges. As the first among the visible deliverables of the Circular Economy Package, the Platform will support effective action by all players through the sharing of experience and best practice informed by evidence, results and learning.

Members also called for policy coherence and integrated action at EU and national levels in order to prevent surplus food from arising at source, in line with the food use hierarchy, and provide incentives for change. The need to take a holistic view of the food value chain and to address challenges at each stage, including primary production, was stressed by many organisations.

In view of the commitment of Member States towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 laid down in the June Council conclusions on Food Losses and Waste¹, the Commission called on Member States to implement national food waste prevention programmes and set targets to achieve food waste reduction in cooperation with all players by 2019.

The meeting also benefitted from the presentation of survey results by the Slovak Presidency of the Council which had reviewed ongoing national efforts in Member States to prevent and measure food waste. According to the results presented, the majority of Member States have already adopted a national strategy to prevent food waste or are actively considering such a strategy to be adopted in the near future. Issues such as the need for a common definition of food waste for measurement purposes, a common framework to facilitate the use of former foodstuffs, public awareness raising, promoting food donation as an effective tool to reduce food waste, and exchange of good practices in the food supply chain were identified as key challenges for the near future.

At the Platform meeting, the Commission presented its current reflections on the way forward on three concrete deliverables from the Circular Economy Action Plan related to food waste measurement, EU guidelines to facilitate food donation and the use of former foodstuffs in feed. The Commission has also proposed the setting up of two specific sub-groups to help progress work on immediate priorities (e.g. food waste measurement and food donation) and will consider other requests made by members for sub-groups focussing on "action and implementation" and valorisation of food resources not fit for sale (e.g. former foodstuffs, co-products and by-products of food production) as products for animal feed.

Based on further input from Member States, the Commission expects to be able to make significant progress on these issues in advance of the next meeting of the Platform, scheduled to be held in June 2017.

In 2017, the Commission intends to adopt guidelines to facilitate the donation of safe, edible food.

The Commission also intends to continue working with the Platform on the preparation of methodology to measure food waste consistently across the EU, based on the tools developed by the EU-funded research project FUSIONS.

¹ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10730-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

As the issue of measurement of food losses cannot be effectively addressed within the current scope of waste legislation, the Commission intends to further pursue reflections on alternative options with Platform members and closely collaborate with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) which leads global monitoring of food losses and waste for the purpose of the Sustainable Development Goal.

In practical terms, in 2017 the Commission also plans to make available a digital platform to facilitate direct communication and exchange of information on food waste prevention and thereby help accelerate the transfer of knowledge and experience among all members.