



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

A7-0430/2011

30.11.2011

REPORT

on how to avoid food wastage: strategies for a more efficient food chain in the
EU
(2011/2175(INI))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

Rapporteur: Salvatore Caronna

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION.....	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	11
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY	13
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION.....	19
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE	23

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on how to avoid food wastage: strategies for a more efficient food chain in the EU (2011/2175(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 191 and 192 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, relating to preserving, protecting and improving the quality of human health and the environment,
 - having regard to Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on the Commission Green Paper on the management of bio-waste in the European Union²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2010 on fair revenues for farmers: a better-functioning food supply chain in Europe³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2011 on recognition of agriculture as a strategic sector in the context of food security⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 23 June 2011 on the CAP towards 2020: meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future⁵,
 - having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2011 on a more efficient and fairer retail market⁶,
 - having regard to the preparatory study on food waste across EU 27 – DG Environment, European Commission (2010),
 - having regard to the FAO study (2011) on global food losses and food waste,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the opinions of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (A7-0430/2011),
- A. whereas every year in Europe a growing amount of healthy, edible food – some estimates say up to 50% – is lost along the entire food supply chain, in some cases all the way up to the consumer, and becomes waste;

¹ OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0264.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0302.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0006.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0297.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0307.

- B. whereas a study published by the Commission estimates annual food waste generation in the 27 Member States at approximately 89 million tonnes, or 179 kg per capita, varying considerably between individual countries and the various sectors, without even considering agricultural food waste or fish catches returned to the sea; whereas total food waste will have risen to approximately 126 million tonnes (a 40% increase) by 2020 unless additional preventive actions or measures are taken;
- C. whereas 79 million people are still living below the poverty line in the European Union – in other words, more than 15% of EU citizens earn less than 60% of average earnings in their country of residence; whereas, of these, 16 million have received food aid from charitable institutions;
- D. whereas the disturbing figures disclosed by the FAO, according to which 925 million people around the world are currently at risk of undernourishment, make the prospect of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including halving poverty and hunger by 2015, even more remote;
- E. whereas, according to the FAO study, the anticipated rise in the world's population from 7 billion to 9 billion will necessitate at least a 70% increase in food supplies by 2050;
- F. whereas world grain production has risen from 824 million tonnes in 1960 to around 2.2 billion tonnes in 2010, 27 million tonnes being added to production every year; whereas, if global agro-production continues to follow this trend, the increase in grain production by 2050 compared with today's figures will be sufficient to feed the world's population; whereas, in the meantime, as post-harvest losses amount to about 14% of total production and another 15% is lost in distribution and in household waste, three-fifths of the total supply increase needed by 2050 could be achieved if we simply stopped wasting food;
- G. whereas reducing food waste is a significant preliminary step in combating hunger in the world, responding to the increase in demand predicted by the FAO and improving people's nutritional levels;
- H. whereas less food waste would mean more efficient land use, better water resource management, and positive repercussions for the whole agricultural sector worldwide, as well as boosting the fight against undernourishment in the developing world;
- I. whereas food waste has not just ethical, economic, social and nutritional but also health and environmental implications, since unconsumed food mountains make a major contribution to global warming and food waste produces methane, which as a greenhouse gas is 21 times more powerful than carbon dioxide;
- J. whereas there is minimal wastage of food by consumers in developing countries; and whereas any food waste in those countries is mainly due to financial and technical limitations along the entire food production chain;
- K. whereas in Europe and North America, in the previous decades, when food production was abundant, food waste was not a policy priority, which led to an overall increase in food waste along the food supply chain; whereas in Europe and North America food waste occurs predominantly at the retail and consumption stage, as opposed to in the developing

world, where production, harvest, processing and transport are the stages where losses are most common;

- L. whereas, according to recent studies, for every kilogram of food produced, 4.5 kg of CO₂ are released into the atmosphere; whereas in Europe the approximately 89 Mt of food wasted produce 170 Mt CO₂ eq./yr, broken down thus: food industry 59 Mt CO₂ eq./yr, domestic consumption 78 Mt CO₂ eq./yr, other 33 Mt CO₂ eq./yr; whereas the production of the 30% of food which ends up not being consumed accounts for an additional 50% of use of water resources for irrigation, while producing a kilogram of beef requires 5-10 tonnes of water;
- M. whereas the threat to food security is accompanied by mirror-image rich-world scourges such as obesity, cardiovascular illnesses and cancers arising from a diet overrich in fats and proteins, the result being that the world's overfed population numbers as many as the underfed and malnourished;
- N. whereas the recent fall in factors of production is in contradiction with the need to increase the food supply in the EU;
- O. whereas support given to developing countries to improve the efficiency of their food supply chains can not only directly benefit the local economies and sustainable growth in those countries but can also, indirectly, aid the global balance of trade in agricultural products and the redistribution of natural resources;
- P. whereas the exchange of good practices at European and international level, as well as assistance for developing countries, are of major importance in combating food waste worldwide;
- Q. whereas a growing number of Member States are embarking on awareness-raising initiatives to inform the public about the causes and effects of food waste, ways of reducing it and how to promote a scientific and civic culture guided by the principles of sustainability and solidarity;
- R. whereas food waste occurs across the entire food supply chain from the agricultural production stage, to the storage, processing, distribution, management and consumption stages;
- S. whereas the players in the food supply chain are chiefly responsible for food security and addressing avoidable food waste where possible;
- T. whereas some Member States ban food being sold at below cost price, robbing retailers of the opportunity to sell unsold fresh food at a cheaper price to consumers towards the end of the day and contributing further to waste in the food chain;
- U. whereas the recently adopted Regulation on Food Information to Consumers clarifies that foods with a 'use by' date should be considered unsafe after the expiry of that date;
- V. whereas the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain and the European Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable are working towards

improving efficiency and sustainability along the food supply chain;

1. Believes food security to be a basic human right that is achieved through the availability, accessibility, use and temporal stability of healthy, sufficient, adequate and nutritious food; stresses that world food production is conditioned by a number of factors, including the finite nature of natural resources vis-à-vis the rising global population and the limited access to food of the most vulnerable strata;
2. Calls on the Council, the Commission, the Member States and players in the food supply chain to address as a matter of urgency the problem of food waste along the entire supply and consumption chain and to devise guidelines for and support ways of improving the efficiency of the food supply chain sector by sector, and urges them to prioritise this within the European policy agenda; calls on the Commission, in this context, to raise awareness of the ongoing work in both the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain and the European Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable, including with regard to recommendations on how to tackle food waste;
3. Is concerned about the fact that a considerable amount of food is being discarded on a daily basis, despite being perfectly edible and that food waste gives rise to both environmental and ethical problems and economic and social costs, which pose internal market challenges for both business and consumers; calls on the Commission, therefore, to analyse the causes and effects of the disposal, wastage and landfilling annually in Europe of approximately 50% of the food produced and to ensure that this includes a detailed analysis of the waste as well as an assessment of the economic, environmental, nutritional and social impacts; asks the Commission, furthermore, to take practical measures towards halving food waste by 2025 and at the same time preventing the generation of bio-waste;
4. Points out that food waste has a number of causes: overproduction, faulty product targeting (unadapted size or shape), deterioration of the product or its packaging, marketing rules (problems of appearance or defective packaging), and inadequate stock management or marketing strategies;
5. Calls on the Commission to assess the impact of a policy of enforcement with regard to food waste; hopes that a waste treatment enforcement policy right along the food chain will be adopted by applying the ‘polluter pays’ principle;
6. Considers that, in order to reduce food waste as much as possible, it is necessary to involve all participants in the food supply chain and to target the various causes of waste sector by sector; calls on the Commission, therefore, to make an analysis of the whole food chain in order to identify in which food sectors food waste is occurring most, and which solutions can be used to prevent food waste;
7. Urges the Commission to cooperate with the FAO in setting common targets to reduce global food waste;
8. Notes that the issue of food waste should be addressed from the standpoint of resource efficiency and calls on the Commission to deliver specific initiatives targeting food waste under the Resource-Efficient Europe flagship initiative in order to ensure that this issue

receives as much attention and is the subject of as much awareness raising as the issue of energy efficiency, since both are equally important for the environment and our future;

9. Calls on the Commission to create specific food waste prevention targets for Member States, as part of the waste prevention targets to be reached by Member States by 2014, as recommended by the 2008 Waste Framework Directive;
10. Considers it vital to reduce food waste along the entire food chain, from farm to fork; stresses the need to adopt a coordinated strategy followed by practical action, including an exchange of best practice, at European and national level, in order to improve coordination between Member States with a view to avoiding food waste and in order to improve the efficiency of the food supply chain; believes that this could be achieved by promoting direct relations between producers and consumers and shortening the food supply chain, as well as by calling on all stakeholders to take greater shared responsibility and encouraging them to step up coordination in order to further improve logistics, transport, stock management and packaging;
11. Calls on the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to exchange best practices, combining knowledge from relevant forums and platforms such as the EU Retail Forum on Sustainability, the European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable, the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain, the Informal Member States Network 'Friends of Sustainable Food', the Consumer Goods Forum, etc;
12. Calls on the Commission, when drawing up development policies, to support measures aimed at reducing waste along the entire food supply chain in developing countries where production methods, post-harvest management, processing and packaging infrastructure and processes are problematic and inadequate; suggests encouraging the modernisation of this agricultural equipment and infrastructure in order to reduce post-harvest losses and extend the shelf-life of food; believes, further, that improving the efficiency of the food supply chain can help the countries concerned achieve food self-sufficiency;
13. Calls for the retargeting of support measures at EU level regarding the distribution of food products to the Union's least-favoured citizens, Community aid for the supply of milk and dairy products to schoolchildren, and the programme for encouraging the consumption of fruit in schools, with a view to preventing food waste;
14. Notes that there is confusion around the definition of the expressions 'food waste' and 'bio-waste'; believes that 'food waste' is generally understood to mean all the foodstuffs discarded from the food supply chain for economic or aesthetic reasons or owing to the nearness of the 'use by' date, but which are still perfectly edible and fit for human consumption and, in the absence of any alternative use, are ultimately eliminated and disposed of, generating negative externalities from an environmental point of view, economic costs and a loss of revenue for businesses;
15. Notes that there is no harmonised definition of food waste in Europe; calls on the Commission, therefore, to put forward a legislative proposal defining the typology of 'food waste' and in this context also to establish a separate definition of food residuals for biofuels or biowaste, which are separate from ordinary food waste since they are reutilised

for energy purposes;

16. Believes that all Member States should make it possible for retailers to substantially reduce the price of fresh food to below the cost of production when it is close to its sell-before date, in order to reduce the amount of unsold food discarded and to offer a possibility for consumers with a lower disposable income to buy high-quality food at cheaper prices;
17. Wishes to point out that agriculture, by its very nature, is resource-efficient and can play a fundamental and pioneering role in combating food waste; urges the Commission, therefore, to include ambitious measures to this effect in its next legislative proposals on agriculture, trade and distribution of foodstuffs; hopes for joint action by way of investment in research, science, technology, education, advice and innovation in agriculture with a view to reducing food waste and educating and encouraging consumers to behave more responsibly and deliberately to prevent food waste;
18. Is of the opinion that quality requirements regarding appearance, whether imposed by European or national legislation or by internal company rules, which stipulate the size and shape of fresh fruit and vegetables in particular, are at the basis of many unnecessary discards, which increase the amount of food wasted; asks stakeholders to recognise and explain the nutritional value of agricultural products of imperfect size/shape in order to reduce discards;
19. Calls on the Commission to develop guidance on the implementation of Article 5 of the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC), which defines by-products, given that the lack of legal clarity under EU legislation regarding the distinction between waste and non-waste could hinder the efficient use of by-products;
20. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, processors and retailers to develop guidelines to address avoidable food waste and to implement greater resource efficiency in their section of the food supply chain, to continuously work to improve processing, packaging and transporting so as to cut down on unnecessary food waste;
21. Urges the Commission and the Member States to encourage the exchange of best practice and promote awareness-raising campaigns to inform the public of the value of food and agricultural produce, the causes and effects of food waste and ways of reducing it, thereby fostering a scientific and civic culture guided by the principles of sustainability and solidarity; calls Member States to encourage the introduction of food education courses, at all levels of education, including colleges, explaining for example how to store, cook and dispose the food, thereby encouraging better behaviours; stresses the important role played by local authorities and municipal enterprises, in addition to retailers and the media, in providing information and support to citizens on preventing and reducing food waste;
22. Welcomes the initiatives already taken in various Member States aimed at recovering, locally, unsold and discarded products throughout the food supply chain in order to redistribute them to groups of citizens below the minimum income threshold who lack purchasing power; stresses the importance of the exchange of best practices in this connection between Member States, as also of initiatives at local level; points out in this

regard the valuable contribution made, on the one hand, by volunteers in sorting and distributing such products and, on the other, by professional companies that are developing anti-waste systems and measures;

23. Calls on retailers to engage with food redistribution programmes for citizens who lack purchasing power and to implement measures allowing for products nearing expiry to be discounted;
24. Welcomes the work of companies and professional partnerships in the public, private, academic and community sectors in devising and implementing, at European level, coordinated action programmes to combat food waste;
25. Considers that investing in methods leading to a reduction in food waste could result in a reduction in the losses incurred by agri-food businesses and, consequently, in a lowering of food prices, thus potentially also improving the access to food by poorer segments of the population; calls on the Commission to determine ways and means of better involving agri-food businesses, wholesale markets, shops, distribution chains, public and private caterers, restaurants, public administrations and NGOs in anti-waste practices; encourages for this purpose the use of the internet and new technologies; notes, in this context, the importance of setting up a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) for food focussed inter alia on preventing food wastage; calls on the Commission to ask the agri-food sector and stakeholders to assume their share of the responsibility for the food waste problem, in particular by providing a variety of portion sizes and thus to assess the benefits of offering more bulk food products and to take better account of single-person households in order to reduce food waste and thereby consumers' carbon footprint;
26. Calls on the Member States to create economic incentives for limiting food waste;
27. Stresses that the GHG emissions associated with the production, packaging and transportation of food that is thrown away are needless additional emissions; notes that improving the efficiency of the food supply chain, so as to prevent food waste and eliminate edible food waste, is a key step towards climate change mitigation;
28. Calls on the Commission to consider possible amendments to the public procurement rules on catering and hospitality services so that, all other conditions being equal, when contracts are awarded, priority is given to undertakings that guarantee that they will redistribute free of charge any unallocated (unsold) items to groups of citizens who lack purchasing power, and that promote specific activities to reduce waste upstream, such as giving preference to agricultural and food products produced as near as possible to the place of consumption;
29. Calls on the Commission to set an example by addressing food waste within the EU institutions, and to take the necessary measures as a matter of urgency to reduce the particularly large quantity of food discarded every day in the canteens of the various EU institutions;
30. Calls on the Commission to assess and encourage measures to reduce food waste upstream, such as dual-date labelling ('sell by' and 'use by'), and the discounted sale of foods close to their expiry date and of damaged goods; notes that the optimisation and

efficient use of food packaging can play an important role in preventing food waste by reducing a product's overall environmental impact, not least by means of industrial eco-design, which includes measures such as varying pack sizes to help consumers buy the right amount and discourage excessive consumption of resources, providing advice on how to store and use products, and designing packaging in such a way as to increase the longevity of goods and maintain their freshness, always ensuring that appropriate materials which are not prejudicial to health or to the durability of products are used for food packaging and preservation;

31. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to issue recommendations regarding refrigeration temperatures, based on evidence that non-optimal and improper temperature leads to food becoming prematurely inedible and causes unnecessary waste; underlines the fact that harmonised levels of temperature throughout the supply chain would improve product conservation and reduce food waste for products transported and sold cross-border;
32. Recalls the results of the survey conducted by the Commission (Consumer Empowerment in the EU – SEC(2011)0469), according to which 18 % of European citizens do not understand the 'best before' label; asks the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to clarify the meaning of the date labels ('best before', 'expiry date' and 'use by') in order to reduce consumers' uncertainty regarding food edibility and to disseminate accurate information to the public, notably the understanding that the minimum durability 'best before' date is related to quality, while the 'use by' date is related to safety, in order to help consumers make informed choices; urges the Commission to publish a user-friendly manual on the use of food close to expiry dates, while ensuring food safety in donation and animal feed, and building on best practices by stakeholders in the food supply chain, in order, for instance, to match supply and demand more quickly and effectively;
33. Calls on the Member States to encourage and support initiatives geared to stimulating sustainable small- and medium-scale production that is linked to local and regional markets and consumption; acknowledges that local markets are environmentally sustainable and contribute to the stability of the primary sector; asks that the common agricultural policy earmark, in the future, the necessary funding to promote stability in the primary sector, for example by means of direct sales, local markets and all measures to promote low or zero food miles;
34. Calls on the Member States to ensure that small local producers and local producer groups can take part in public procurement procedures for the implementation of specific programmes promoting, in particular, the consumption of fruit and dairy products in schools;
35. Urges the Council and the Commission to designate 2013 the European Year against Food Waste, as a key information and awareness-raising initiative for European citizens and to focus national governments' attention on this important topic, with a view to allocating sufficient funds to tackle the challenges of the near future;
36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Food waste has assumed such proportions that it can be regarded as a global problem that is reflected right along the food supply chain, from the field to the fork.

It is estimated, based on data gathered since 1974, that food waste around the world has risen by 50%.

Waste occurs on farmland, in the processing industry, in distribution companies and in consumers' homes; there is waste in industrialised countries and in developing countries. This squandering of food generates an industry parallel to the production industry and causes a whole series of negative externalities.

The issue of food waste conflicts with the fundamental problem of food supply, which is seriously compromised by a number of factors, including limited natural resources as compared with the growth in the world population and the meagre access of the poorest population groups to food.

Hence there has been a series of analyses and deliberations on the use we make of the food available to us.

A recent study commissioned by the FAO reveals some rather disturbing facts, especially as concerns the industrialised world: Europeans and North Americans waste somewhere between 95 kg and 115 kg of food per capita per year, as opposed to between 6 kg and 11 kg in sub-Saharan Africa.

The reasons for the waste are not always the same: they differ according to the various stages in the food supply chain, the product type as well as the place where the waste occurs. By subdividing the food chain into five sectors (agricultural production, management and storage, processing, distribution and consumption), we see that different conduct from one sector to another leads to the discarding of perfectly edible food: from losses at the harvesting and storage stages, to insecure transport conditions, to labelling errors, to end-consumers' bad habits when purchasing and using foodstuffs.

As concerns the industrialised countries, most wastage is concentrated at the final stages, namely distribution and consumption, owing above all to the overabundance of food produced, whereas in developing countries it is concentrated at the early stages, owing to the lack of advanced agricultural practices, efficient transport systems and infrastructure (the cold chain, for example) and secure storage facilities.

These facts demonstrate that the bulk of food produced nowadays could in fact be reused for food purposes rather than being disposed of like any other refuse, with a major impact in environmental and economic terms as well as ethical implications.

Indeed, the production of surplus food that we do not consume has a high environmental cost, deriving from the use of energy and natural resources (first and foremost water), as well as from gas emissions into the atmosphere: the 89 million or so tonnes of food thrown away in

Europe are in fact estimated to produce 170 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum. Over and above the environmental damage caused by producing food that is then not used, account must also be taken of the cost of processing and disposing of what is wasted and the loss of revenue for producer undertakings.

Combating food waste must become a priority on Europe's policy agenda: the Commission, Council and Member States must draw up practical strategies and measures to halve food waste along the entire supply chain by 2025, to improve the efficiency of the industry and to raise the public's awareness of an issue that is unknown in many respects.

People must be informed not only about the causes and effects of waste but also about ways of reducing it: a scientific and civic culture guided by the principles of sustainability and solidarity must be fostered so as to encourage better behaviour.

Experience has shown that spontaneous initiatives taken by associations, be they voluntary or professional, to publicise and bring about an anti-waste culture have been extremely successful wherever they have been carried out.

For this reason, Parliament requests that 2013 be declared the European Year against Food Waste, serving as a key information and awareness-raising tool on this important issue.

22.11.2011

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on how to avoid food wastage: strategies for a more efficient food chain in the EU
(2011/2175(INI))

Rapporteur: Anna Rosbach

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas in Europe food losses during the production, post-harvest and processing stages and food waste during the retailing and consumption stages amount to 179 kg/year per capita¹;
- B. whereas 60% of food waste from European households could be avoided, and 20% of food is thrown away owing to confusion over the dates on product labelling²;
- C. whereas food waste was not a policy priority in Europe and Northern America in previous decades when food production was abundant, which led to an overall increase in food waste throughout the food supply chain; whereas in Europe and North America food waste occurs predominantly at the retail and consumption stage, as opposed to in the developing world, where production, harvest, processing and transport are the stages where losses pose the main problems;
- D. whereas it requires a paradigm shift to positively change consumers' behaviour towards less food wastage, but improvements can already be made in the EU food chain in the management of the storage, transport and distribution stages;
- E. whereas food waste not only gives rise to economic costs but also cannot be justified in

¹ Preparatory Study on Food Waste across the EU 27, European Commission, Paris 2010, p. 11.

² 'Environment for Europeans' magazine, published by the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment, Luxembourg 2011, p. 8.

ethical and environmental terms;

- F. whereas food production is linked to a high level of CO2 emissions and resource use (including land and water);
- G. whereas, moreover, post-harvest losses are estimated to be EUR 4 billion each year in Europe alone;
- 1. Is convinced that the prevention of food losses has to be the very first priority, as food is a valuable and scarce resource and millions of people are suffering from hunger;
- 2. Calls for measures to be taken to reduce the waste of food products in the food industry, trade, restaurants, healthcare establishments, schools and other establishments, as many types of bio-waste arise as a result of the consumption of food by communities;
- 3. Points out that there is no harmonised definition of food waste, which leads to serious discrepancies in the statistical data collection and hampers effective action at EU and national level;
- 4. Considers that the EU's bio-waste policy should be thought through and adapted from both an ethical and an environmental point of view;
- 5. Recognises that reducing food waste has significant environmental benefits, not only in terms of avoiding the negative effects of waste disposal, but also in terms of saving energy, emissions, water and land use in the production process and avoiding negative effects related to potentially unsustainable agricultural production practices, such as water pollution and biodiversity loss;
- 6. Takes the view that much food waste can be prevented if the food supply chain is kept short, with efficient local production and distribution, thus contributing to reducing food waste;
- 7. Is concerned by the fact that the environmental costs of production are not properly reflected in consumer prices;
- 8. Calls on the Commission to propose clear food-waste reduction targets in the context of the Waste Framework Directive; calls on the Commission to put a special focus on food waste when assessing the Member States' waste prevention programmes, objectives and indicators in accordance with the Waste Framework Directive; calls for the effects on the generation of food waste to be appraised in the impact assessment of each food-related legislative proposal;
- 9. Calls on the Member States to put a special focus on food waste in their waste prevention programmes and to take legislative action aimed at avoiding food waste throughout the whole production chain, including at the level of retail and wholesale trade; this should include the setting of targets for waste avoidance, separation and redistribution;
- 10. Calls for the waste hierarchy as laid down in the Waste Framework Directive to be strictly applied to food waste too, i.e.

- avoidance as the first priority, thereby reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the use of water,
 - re-use and recycling (e.g. composting) as the next options,
 - use for biogas production as the next step in the hierarchy, and
 - incineration or landfilling being used only as a last resort;
11. Stresses the need for more bio-recycling facilities and for increased household collection of unavoidable food waste such as unwanted components of foodstuffs; supports actions such as home composting and bio-recycling in agriculture;
 12. Believes that, in order to protect human health, the precautionary principle must be uppermost in the treatment and use of bio-waste, particularly in the light of its possible indirect return to food/the food chain and its utilisation in imported foods and feedstuffs;
 13. Is of the opinion that packaging must be optimised and reduced: research and innovation in the field of intelligent packaging should be promoted to explore good solutions for the actual use-by date for individual products;
 14. Believes firmly that an environmental consciousness in terms of valuing and preserving environmental resources must be fostered among consumers so that they understand that whenever there is consumption, there is also an impact on our environment;
 15. Stresses that the GHG emissions associated with the production, packaging and transportation of food that is thrown away, are needless additional emissions; notes that improving the efficiency of the food supply chain, so as to prevent food waste and eliminate edible food waste, is a key action towards climate change mitigation;
 16. Believes that sales by loose weight and in customised portions in supermarkets should be encouraged to reduce the purchase of excess food by customers;
 17. Calls for investigations into whether previously issued regulations cause unnecessary rules that force supermarkets and food shops to throw away perfectly good food;
 18. Recognises that consumer confusion, a lack of understanding, and misinterpretation of food durability dates on food labels is one of the reasons for food discards; recalls that the legislation on food information to consumers requires use-by and best-before dates and instructions on special conditions of storage and use of packaging; calls on the Member States and the food industry to conduct information campaigns which will enable consumers to understand the labelling and correctly interpret the minimum durability dates, thus preventing consumers from being misled; is however aware that food producers for reasons of legal certainty are especially cautious when determining minimum durability dates;
 19. Notes, in this context, the importance of setting up a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) for food, focused inter alia on preventing food wastage;
 20. Is aware that in Europe, where food wastage is highest at retail and consumption level, the

main orientation of waste reduction efforts should be towards exchange of best practices, improved routines in the treatment of food and a change in behaviour on the part of companies and individuals throughout the whole food chain, from the beginning to the end, to markedly decrease food waste, while only a coordinated action between EU and national regulators, industry and consumer organisations can achieve tangible results; urges the Commission and the Member States therefore to lend their support to awareness-raising measures and campaigns aimed at those goals, and more particularly at cultivating awareness of the link between consumption and production, costs, waste, health and the environment, but also aimed at educating young people, starting already in early childhood, on how to deal with food, food discards and leftovers;

21. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include measures in the legislative package on the reform of the common agricultural policy, on the prevention of food waste in the production, harvest, processing and transport stages and to come forward with concrete actions for improving public awareness and consumer responsibility at the retail and consumer stages;
22. Calls on the Commission to conduct an analysis of the whole food chain to identify the food sectors in which food waste is occurring most and the solutions which can be used to prevent food waste;
23. Calls also on the Commission to investigate what proportion of total food wastage occurs already during harvest; considers that, if this proportion is substantial, the Commission should propose approaches and measures to make it easier for farmers to avoid this;
24. Is of the opinion that quality requirements regarding appearance, whether imposed by EU or national legislation or by internal company rules, which stipulate the size and shape of fresh fruit and vegetables in particular, are at the basis of many unnecessary discards which increase the amount of food wasted;
25. Encourages public institutions, the hospitality sector, schools, hospitals and food banks to collect and redistribute unused food which is still fit for human consumption to those in need, doing so as a supplement to and not a substitution for the existing welfare systems;
26. Believes that new technological developments such as smart refrigerators and packaging with nanotechnology, can play a significant role in reducing food waste; urges the Commission to pay special attention to reducing food waste in its research programmes;
27. Calls on retailers to take their responsibility to reduce food waste seriously; e.g. by easing requirements for marketing standards; calls on the Commission to gather and publish best-practices policies to avoid food waste in the EU's retail sector, as well as practical solutions to deal with or distribute foodstuffs that cannot be sold via the regular channels;
28. Notes that the issue of food waste should be addressed within the scope of resource efficiency and calls on the Commission to deliver specific initiatives targeting food waste under the Resource Efficient Europe flagship initiative;
29. Considers in this context that there is an overall need for EU citizens to know more about food and nutrition;

30. Refers to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on the Commission's Green Paper on the management of bio-waste in the European Union¹, particularly paragraphs 1 to 4 thereof, in which Parliament urged the Commission to come forward with a specific legislative proposal for the treatment of bio-waste, of which food waste is only a part;
31. Notes that genuine food waste can provide a significant and sustainable source of biomass, and can be used to replace bioenergy produced from unsustainable wood imports;
32. Considers that the recycling of bio-waste by composting or use in biogas plants is far preferable to its incineration which is to be avoided and may only be acceptable after a hierarchy has been followed and the waste has been used to its highest value;
33. Stresses that the potential of food waste for energy recovery purposes should not affect, or delay, action towards tackling the food waste problem as such;
34. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the issue of food efficiency receives as much attention and awareness-raising as the issue of energy efficiency, since they are equally important for the environment and our future;
35. Calls on the Commission to set up reporting requirements for Member States on food waste and to standardise methodologies for calculating food-waste quantities at Member State level to ensure comparability;
36. Calls on the Commission to create specific food-waste prevention targets for Member States as part of the waste prevention targets Member States will be set by 2014, as recommended by the 2008 Waste Framework Directive;
37. Stresses the need to introduce separate collection systems for bio-waste, so that this type of waste can be recycled and turned to good use whenever possible and invites the Commission to evaluate the possible recommendation to Member States to adopt a separate collection of food waste, for the household and/or food service sector. Subsidy for the development of separate collection and treatment infrastructure should also be evaluated.

¹ Texts adopted P7_TA(2010)0264.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	22.11.2011
Result of final vote	+: 38 -: 0 0: 15
Members present for the final vote	János Áder, Elena Oana Antonescu, Pilar Ayuso, Paolo Bartolozzi, Martin Callanan, Chris Davies, Esther de Lange, Anne Delvaux, Edite Estrela, Jill Evans, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Julie Girling, Françoise Grossetête, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, Satu Hassi, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Dan Jørgensen, Karin Kadenbach, Holger Kraemer, Jo Leinen, Corinne Lepage, Peter Liese, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Linda McAvan, Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Miroslav Ouzký, Antonyia Parvanova, Mario Pirillo, Pavel Poc, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Anna Rosbach, Oreste Rossi, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Carl Schlyter, Richard Seeber, Theodoros Skylakakis, Bogusław Sonik, Salvatore Tatarella, Anja Weisgerber, Åsa Westlund, Glenis Willmott, Marina Yannakoudakis
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Miroslav Mikolášik, Alojz Peterle, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Renate Sommer, Bart Staes, Csaba Sándor Tabajdi, Michail Tremopoulos, Andrea Zanoni

18.10.2011

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on how to avoid food wastage: strategies for a more efficient food chain in the EU
(2011/2175(INI))

Rapporteur: Anna Maria Corazza Bildt

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that food waste represents both environmental and ethical problems and economic and social costs, which pose internal market challenges for both business and consumers;
2. Emphasises that political will is required in order to find solutions to food waste; urges the Commission to prioritise all aspects of food wastage within the European policy agenda; asks the Commission, in consultation with the Member States, to set targets for reducing food waste, and asks the Member States and all parties concerned to take practical measures to fulfil those targets;
3. Urges the Commission to cooperate with the FAO in setting common targets to reduce global food waste;
4. Recalls the results of the survey conducted by the Commission (Consumer Empowerment in the EU – SEC(2011)0469), according to which 18 % of European citizens do not understand the ‘Best before’ label; asks the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to clarify the meaning of the date labels (‘Best before’, ‘Expiry date’ and ‘Use by’) in order to reduce consumers’ uncertainty regarding food edibility and to disseminate

accurate information to the public, notably the understanding that the minimum durability 'Best before' date is related to quality, while the 'Use by' date is related to safety, in order to help consumers make informed choices;

5. Notes that the recently adopted Regulation on Food Information to Consumers clarifies that foods with a 'Use by' date should be considered unsafe after the expiry of that date;
6. Calls on the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to encourage information and education initiatives, starting with children in schools, on food waste prevention, which will help individual consumers to develop better awareness and make responsible choices, and reinforce their perception of the value of food and their ability to judge food edibility by looking, smelling, touching and tasting; also encourages practical food waste prevention measures in the canteens of schools, public administrations, public and private undertakings and European institutions;
7. Invites the Commission to consider possible amendments to the public procurement rules, especially those on catering services, in order to take better account of the problem of food wastage;
8. Calls on all stakeholders to take greater shared responsibility; encourages them to step up coordination in order to further improve logistics, transport, stock management and packaging so as to tackle food wastage along the entire supply chain; also asks stakeholders to recognise and explain the nutritional value of agricultural products of imperfect size/shape in order to reduce discards;
9. Stresses the importance of continuing to invest in the development of innovative production techniques, such as efficient methods of packing and storing products;
10. Calls on the food industry and other stakeholders to offer variation in food package sizes, to assess the benefits of offering more bulk food products and to take better account of single-person households in order to reduce food waste and thereby consumers' carbon footprint;
11. Urges retailers and local authorities to use their daily contact with consumers to communicate ways of storing and using food more efficiently and to encourage consumers to plan their food shopping (e.g. practical tips and awareness-raising campaigns); believes that discount offers should further target excess stock and damaged food that is safe close to its expiry date, for example by offering a 50 % discount 24 hours before the expiry date;
12. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to issue recommendations regarding refrigeration temperatures based on evidence that non-optimal and improper temperature leads to food becoming prematurely inedible and causes unnecessary waste; underlines the fact that harmonised levels of temperature throughout the supply chain would improve product conservation and reduce food waste for products transported and sold cross-border;
13. Urges the Commission to publish a user-friendly manual on the use of food close to expiry dates, while ensuring food safety in donation and animal feed, and building on best

practices by stakeholders in the food supply chain, in order, for instance, to match supply and demand more quickly and effectively;

14. Notes the interest in developing composting of biodegradable food as an alternative to discarding products; welcomes initiatives in Member States to provide citizens with collective areas for this purpose; calls on the Commission to encourage these efforts by promoting the exchange of experience and good practice at European level;
15. Calls on the Member States to create economic incentives for limiting food waste;
16. Notes that waste management in the Member States could be improved in order to help make the food chain more effective; calls on the Commission to investigate the link between food waste and the quality of waste management and to assess which measures could be taken in the field of waste management to reduce food waste;
17. Believes that it is possible to reduce food waste by reinforcing cooperation between consumers, producers, manufacturers, retailers, public caterers, restaurants, public administrations and NGOs; encourages use of the internet and new technologies for this purpose;
18. Calls on the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to exchange best practices, combining knowledge from relevant forums and platforms such as the EU Retail Forum on Sustainability, the European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable, the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain, the Informal Member States Network 'Friends of Sustainable Food', the Consumer Goods Forum, etc;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.10.2011
Result of final vote	+: 32 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Lara Comi, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, António Fernando Correia De Campos, Jürgen Creutzmann, Cornelis de Jong, Christian Engström, Evelyne Gebhardt, Malcolm Harbour, Iliana Ivanova, Sandra Kalniete, Hans-Peter Mayer, Gianni Pittella, Mitro Repo, Robert Rochefort, Heide Rühle, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Bernadette Vergnaud, Barbara Weiler
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Ashley Fox, Anna Hedh, María Irigoyen Pérez, Othmar Karas, Constance Le Grip, Emma McClarkin, Antonia Parvanova, Konstantinos Poupakis, Olga Sehnalová, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Anja Weisgerber

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	23.11.2011
Result of final vote	+: 38 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Liam Aylward, José Bové, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Herbert Dorfmann, Robert Dušek, Iratxe García Pérez, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Martin Häusling, Esther Herranz García, Peter Jahr, Elisabeth Jeggle, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elisabeth Köstinger, George Lyon, Gabriel Mato Adrover, Mairead McGuinness, James Nicholson, Rareş-Lucian Niculescu, Georgios Papastamkos, Marit Paulsen, Britta Reimers, Ulrike Rodust, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris, Alyn Smith, Marc Tarabella, Janusz Wojciechowski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Luís Paulo Alves, Salvatore Caronna, Spyros Danellis, Giovanni La Via, Astrid Lulling, Hans-Peter Mayer, Maria do Céu Patrão Neves, Valdemar Tomaševski
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Anna Maria Corazza Bildt