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*Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection*

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**2011/2175(INI)**

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

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## 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

<b>Date adopted</b>	17.10.2011
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 32 -: 0 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	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
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Ashley Fox, Anna Hedh, María Irigoyen Pérez, Othmar Karas, Constance Le Grip, Emma McClarkin, Antonyia Parvanova, Konstantinos Poupakis, Olga Sehnalová, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Anja Weisgerber