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As part of the 'farm to fork' strategy under the European Green Deal, the Commission plans to revise Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers ('FIC Regulation'). One of the proposed changes consists in updating the rules on the date marking of food products ('use by' and 'best before' dates), as consumers often misunderstand and misuse date marking. According to a 2015 Eurobarometer, less than 1 in 2 consumers understand the meaning of date marking. 'Use by' thus indicates the ultimate food safety date, and 'best before', refers to the date food retains its optimal quality. A Commission study concluded that up to 10% of all food waste generated in the EU could be linked to date marking.

A public consultation was open from 13 December 2021 to 7 March 2022. A total of 3 225 responses were received, of which 65% were submitted by citizens. A majority of respondents (92%) believe that consumers' understanding of date marking has the highest impact on consumer decisions to consume or discard food products. Similarly, 70% of contributions show that consumers would understand date marking better if the way of expressing the 'best before' and 'use by' date on products was improved in terms of terminology, format and/or visual presentation. Finally, a majority of participants (68%) consider that in case a food product is not required to bear a date marking, it is better if a 'best before' date is not provided to avoid food waste.

The Commission is expected to announce its proposal in 2023.

- European Commission, [Food labelling - revision of rules on information provided to consumers](#), roadmap
- European Commission, [Public consultation results](#), March 2022
- European Commission, [Timeline of Farm to Fork actions](#), April 2022
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers
- European Commission, [Date marking and food waste](#), website

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