

Position Paper

Reduction of food waste through 'date marking' in the framework of the EU-Platform on Food Waste and Food Losses

UEAPME appreciates the attempt to reduce food waste via proper comprehensive date marking on food and food labels. To this effect, UEAPME and its members propose the following initiatives:

1 - Rules, guidance and any related tools on date marking established by MS authorities and/or by your respective private sector organisations, in particular related to the choice of "use by" and "best before".

UEAPME is in favor of promoting a better consumer's knowledge to understand the expiry dates of labels. Educational and awareness raising campaigns are helpful and a step in the right direction. In this regard, since small distributors are widespread on the territory, they face difficulties in obtaining detailed information and indications on how to manage food surpluses, food donation and food waste.

Therefore, UEAPME recommends targeted information campaigns and guidelines for small distributors in order to help them to understand how to deal with these issues.

However, UEAPME doubts that the proposal for label standardization would be the best option, because this change would entail costs for food business operators. These costs are difficult to bear by small and very small operators who often produce in limited quantities with a wide range of products.

2 - Rules and/or guidance regarding redistribution of foods past the "best before" date. For Member States where such rules exist (e.g. BE, IT, NL), the task force would like to receive more information on the process that was followed in establishing indicative timelines for redistribution of certain categories of foods past the "best before" date and any relevant information regarding the methodology and criteria used

Some Member States allow the transfer of food surplus for free in form of donations (e.g. Italian law No. 166/2016). The donation must be.

- The food label must be intact as well as its storage conditions must be correct.
- The food business operators are responsible for maintaining the hygiene requirements until the moment of the largess.

Furthermore, in order to reduce waste in the catering sector, regions can make agreements to promote good practices.. (e.g. Lombardi and North Italy have guidelines for using 'leftover' food for 'social' purposes).

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