

European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste

Session 1

16.12.2022-18.12.2022



#FoodWasteEU



1. Overview

The European Citizens' Panel on Food Waste consists of 150 randomly selected citizens and meets for three sessions. The first session took place from 16-18 December 2022 in Brussels and introduced the topic as well as the context of the panel. Citizens got to know each other and learned about the rules for constructive discussions. They then dived deeper into understanding the issue and the challenge of food waste in Europe. European Commission representatives and external speakers helped citizens to better understand the approaches and actions that can help in reducing food waste, but also laid out obstacles, challenges, and dilemmas as well as related benefits and opportunities. The goal of the first session was to generate ideas and to build clusters of approaches that citizens find most promising for further discussions in the upcoming sessions.

Day 1 (Friday)

On Friday, citizens were welcomed by the main moderation and European Commission representatives: Director-General Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen, Vice-President of the European Commission Dubravka Šuica, and Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides. They highlighted the importance of the citizens' panel and the role of the EU in tackling food waste. The main moderation walked citizens through the agenda of session 1 as well as the next sessions. After some ice-breaker games, a short online survey helped citizens to dive into the topic of food waste. To further prepare the citizens for the following discussions Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul, Deputy Head of Unit, Citizens' Dialogues Unit, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission, shortly introduced the EU bodies, as well as the decision-making and legislative process. After that, Anne-Laure Gassin, Team Leader, Farm to Fork Strategy Unit, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission, introduced the topic of food waste in detail. The topic was further expanded by Gyula Kasza Coordinator of Maradék Nélkül (Project Wasteless), the national food waste prevention programme of Hungary and Associate Professor at University of Veterinary Medicine Hungary, and Toine Timmermanns, Program Manager Sustainable Food Chains at Wageningen University, focusing on the questions: 1. What's the challenge, and 2. What can we do? In addition, a panel of diverse experts and practitioners from the public and private sectors (covering the food supply chain, research community and NGOs) presented different perspectives on the topic of food waste. Through an online survey, citizens could continuously submit questions that were answered throughout the weekend by experts in the "Knowledge and Information Centre" (KIC).

Day 2 (Saturday)

On Saturday, citizens worked in 12 parallel working groups that were simultaneously interpreted and facilitated by experienced facilitators. The groups produced their content in multilingual spreadsheets that were interlinked with other groups. During the first slot of the day, group discussions took place around the topic of EU values, food, and food waste in general. Subsequently, the discussions focused on potential solutions and ideas for reducing food waste and their prioritization. Each group chose their five top ideas and approaches for reducing food waste. Citizens were then asked to connect approaches of other groups with their own ideas, thereby contributing to a clustering of all 60 ideas and approaches that had been prioritized before. During the last slot of the day, each group received one of the clusters previously identified. Citizens were then asked to label and discuss the clusters. They complemented the clusters with additional ideas and formulated a justification for why this cluster is important. The goal was to give citizens a shared feeling of ownership and allow everyone to add their thoughts to the topic. At the end of the day, the finalized clusters were automatically translated in all official EU languages to provide citizens with a version in their own language.

Day 3 (Sunday)

On Sunday morning, participants received the clusters in their respective language at the beginning of the plenary session. Speakers from each working group presented the clusters and their justifications. Citizens were then asked to prioritize the clusters in an “Open Forum” consisting of 10 posters displaying the clusters and their names given by the working groups. Citizens received five points each, which they used to rate their preferred clusters on the posters. After a coffee break, a Q&A session was held with the purpose of answering open and recurring questions that came up during the weekend as well as spontaneous questions in the plenary. Afterwards, the ranking of clusters was presented along with information for the next session which will take place virtually. Final remarks and a farewell were given by Richard Kühnel, Director, Representation & Communication in Member States, European Commission.

2. Short agenda

Friday 16 December PLENARY	
02:00pm – 02.15pm	Welcoming word by the European Commission
02-15pm - 03:30pm	Getting to know each other, input on EU institutions and legislation, role of citizens in this process.
03:30pm – 04:00pm	Coffee break
04:00pm – 06:00pm	Introduction into food waste & value chain, moderated panel discussion on actions to reduce food waste with different stakeholders, organisational matters.

Saturday 17 December WORKING GROUPS	
09:00am – 10:30pm	Who are you and what is important for you? Getting to know each other, discussing personal values, exchange on food (waste) habits
10:30am – 11:00am	Coffee break
11:00am – 01:00pm	How can we reduce food waste and which solutions seem most important? Discussion of different approaches and actions, generating ideas, prioritization
01:15pm – 02:15pm	Lunch break
02:30pm – 04:00pm	Which ideas of other groups are similar to our own? Connecting approaches with those of other working groups (connecting and clustering)
04:00pm – 04:30pm	Coffee break
04:30pm – 06:00pm	How can we label similar ideas and why are they important in reducing food waste? Working with clusters of approaches and labelling them (categorizing)

Sunday 18 December PLENARY	
09:00am – 10:45am	What is the result of the working groups? Presentation of clusters, Open Forum, prioritization of clusters
10:45am – 11:15am	Coffee break
11:15am – 01:00pm	What have we learned this weekend and what comes next? Responses to central questions

3. List of experts involved

Throughout the first session, the following experts participated:

European Commission experts:

1. **Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul**, *Deputy Head of Unit, Citizens' Dialogues Unit, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission*
2. **Anne-Laure Gassin**, *Team Leader, Farm to Fork Strategy, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission*

External experts and practitioners:

1. **Toine Timmermans**, *Program Manager Sustainable Food Chains at Wageningen University*
2. **Victor De Meester**, *Environmental Coordinator at Colruyt Group*
3. **Betty Chang**, *Research Area Lead at European Food Information Council*
4. **Thomas Candéal**, *Project Manager at the International Food Waste Coalition*
5. **Maïwenn L'Hoir**, *Project Manager for the fight against food waste and food insecurity - sustainable food, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, France*
6. **Gyula Kasza**, *Coordinator of Maradék Nélkül (Project Wasteless), the national food waste prevention programme of Hungary; Associate Professor at University of Veterinary Medicine Hungary*
7. **Bruno Menne**, *Senior Policy Advisor for food safety, consumer information, animal nutrition and feed, quality insurance at COPA COGECA*
8. **Angela Frigo**, *Secretary General at European Food Banks Federation*

4. Clusters defined by citizens

The results of the working groups were grouped in 10 clusters. During the Open Forum they were prioritized in the following order (All clustered results can be found in Annex 1: Clustered results):

1. C6: Local farmers and small producers: a viable solution to food waste?
2. C2: Learning and awareness raising
3. C3: "Taste the Waste": A Campaign against Food Waste
4. C10: Share, don't waste! / Sharing is saving / A solidarity union for fair access to food to avoid waste
5. C8: Labelling: Inform to waste less
6. C1: Menu sizes and leftover consumption
7. C7: Initiatives to be adopted by supermarkets and the distribution chain to report on food waste and reduce food waste
8. C9: Quality and quantity of information on food waste along the value chain
9. C5: Incentives to reduce corporate food waste
10. C4: The ability of all affected participants to influence EU food policy

5. Recordings of plenary sessions

16.12.2023: <https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/european-citizens-panel-on-food-waste-session-1-22-12-16>

18.12.2023: <https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/european-citizens-panel-on-food-waste-session-1-22-12-18>