



# European Citizens Panel

# Food waste

Information kit

#FoodWasteEU

# About this **kit**

*Welcome to the citizens' panel of the European Commission on food waste! First of all, we would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this process. You, along with 149 other citizens from across the European Union, are about to embark on a real adventure, a citizens' deliberation process focused on food waste.*

*To help you better understand this process, we have structured this informationkit into five sections:*

- 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW GENERATION OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS' PANELS** **4**  
Citizens' panels are a democratic innovation that puts citizens at the centre of public policymaking. In this section, we give you a brief overview of how such processes work.
- 2. THE REMIT: WHAT WILL I BE WORKING ON?** **6**  
The European Commission has called you together to complete a specific task: here's the remit that you are requested to fulfil.
- 3. THE TOPIC: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FOOD WASTE?** **8**  
You do not need to be or become an expert to contribute meaningfully to the citizens' panel, but it is important that you know some basic information on the topic. In this section, you will learn about the main challenges and possible ways of fighting against food waste.
- 4. PRACTICAL INFORMATION** **14**  
We hope to make your travel and participation as smooth as possible. This section covers transport, accommodation, per diems and other practical issues you need to consider.
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It is important for you to know which institutions and organisations are responsible for this panel.



# 1. Introduction to the **new generation** of European citizens' panels

## What are European citizens' panels?

In the citizens' panels of the European Commission, randomly selected citizens from all 27 EU Member States come together to discuss key forthcoming proposals at the European level. Based on these transnational interactions, citizens make recommendations that the European Commission will take into consideration when defining its political goals and concrete policies.

In 2021-22, the European Union convened 4 panels during the Conference on the Future of Europe. There, 800 randomly selected citizens gathered in four European Citizens' Panels, each meeting for three sessions. Participants shared

- in their own language - their perspectives and ideas on the topics of economy, social justice, jobs, education, culture, youth, sports, digital transformation, EU democracy, values, security, rule of law, climate change, health, migration, and the EU's role in the world. At the end of the panels, the citizens formulated 178 recommendations, which later resulted in 49 proposals and more than 300 associated measures.

## A new generation of citizens' panels

The Conference's European Panels were a ground-breaking democratic exercise at the European level, which put citizens at the centre of shaping the future of the European Union.





As a panellist, it is important that you understand that this process is not intended to turn you into an expert on the topic. You will gain basic knowledge on the subject and, based on your own values and life experiences, you will be able to make recommendations.

### Citizens' panel 1 on food waste

As you already know, you are a panellist on panel 1 on food waste. Other citizens will be selected for panels 2 and 3, which will deal with other topics. In this panel, you will meet for three sessions. Two of the sessions will take place in person (in Brussels), and one session will be conducted virtually (online):

- **Session 1:**  
*16-18 December 2022 (in Brussels)*
- **Session 2:** *20-22 January 2023 (online)*
- **Session 3:** *10-12 February (in Brussels)*

The first session will introduce the topic and context for the discussion. You will get to know each other and set the rules for constructive discussions. You will then dive deeper into understanding the issue, and the question of food waste. With the help of external speakers, you will better understand the approaches and actions that can help to reduce food waste and what are the possible obstacles, challenges, and dilemmas as well as the related benefits and opportunities. To conclude the first session, you will define and choose several approaches that will become the focus of the second session.

The second session will build upon the topics and dilemmas that you identified during the first session, with more detailed input on concrete topics and actions. It will be crucial to pay extra attention to certain trade-offs as well as best practices and how each of them might end up affecting people's daily lives. We will invite experts, whose input will be important to guarantee factual information and a high quality of debate. The goal is to embrace creativity to start formulating some very first ideas for recommendations to the European Commission.

In the third and final session, you will turn these first ideas into concrete recommendations, through deliberation and references to factual information. The drafts will then be finalised, and you will vote on the final key recommendations. These recommendations are your response to the remit (see on the next page), when you make them, you will have completed your task as panellists.

The citizens who participated in the Conference called for similar, more frequent opportunities to participate in European policymaking in the future. In response, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced a new generation of citizens' panels to consult randomly selected citizens on certain key proposals at the European level. The citizens' panels that were central to the Conference (on the Future of Europe) are now a regular feature of our democratic life, as she stated in her State of the Union address in September 2022.

The new generation of citizens' panels aims to build on the previous experiences. Three new panels were announced, which will meet for three sessions each. This time, the citizens' panels will deal with more concrete policy topics, focusing on food waste, virtual worlds, and learning mobility. The participants will be able to communicate in their own languages with each other, thanks to the help of interpreters.

### How do the citizens' panels work?

Each panel is made up of 150 randomly selected citizens from all EU Member States, of which one-third are younger than 26 years, to represent the future generations of Europe.

The citizens' panel combines collaborative work in small groups (of around 12 people) with plenary work (all 150 participants together). To carry out this work, panellists will be supported by a facilitation team. This team is made up of experts in making group work more dynamic, to get the best out of each individual and of the group as a whole. They will also provide citizens with a range of tools for collaborative work and collective decision-making.

# 2. The Remit:

## What will I be working on?

*Reducing food waste has enormous potential for reducing the resources we use to produce the food we eat. Fighting food waste is a triple win: it saves food for human consumption; helps farmers, companies and consumers to save money; and lowers the environmental impact of food production and consumption.*

The first EU-wide reporting of food waste levels shows that nearly 57 million tonnes of food waste were generated in 2020 (127kg per person), with the associated market value estimated to be at €130 billion. Households represent a main hotspot, responsible for 55% of all food waste. Rough estimations indicate that in the EU, around 10% of food made available to consumers may be wasted. Furthermore, food waste accounts for about 5% of EU greenhouse gas emissions associated with the EU's overall food consumption footprint.

The EU and its Member States are committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which call for the halving of per capita global food waste at retail and consumer level by 2030 and the reduction of food losses along the food supply chain. However, progress to date has not advanced at the scale and pace needed to reach this goal. The introduction of EU-wide, legally binding food waste reduction targets, through a new legislative proposal, aims to accelerate the EU's progress on this issue and would ensure that all Member States are obliged to take ambitious action to reduce food waste in their respective territories.

The European Commission has decided to convene a citizens' panel with the clear objective of inviting its participants to answer the following question:

***What actions should be taken by EU Member States, actors in the food supply chain, citizens, and other private and public stakeholders in order to step up the effort to reduce food waste?***

It is expected that, during the panels, citizens will be able to receive enough information to understand the issue and to identify and prioritise the actions needed to move forward at the scale and pace required. Importantly, the panel will consider the actions determining behavioural change by all players and efforts that they, as citizens, must fulfil and what help they will need.

The final outcome of the panel will be a list of recommendations that will support the Commission's work on food waste, including the legislative proposal, and serve as a guide to help Member States in achieving the EU food waste reduction targets.





# 3. The topic: What I need to know about food waste?

*Now that you know a bit more about the process, let's focus on the issue itself. We put together this brief section to help you understand the issue of food waste. Of course, we cannot cover every aspect in a few pages. We have selected knowledge that we think will be useful to you as a member of the citizens' panel, and you will receive more detailed information throughout the event.*

*We hope this section gives you insights that will help you to make sense of the presentations and to contribute to the panel's discussions and activities.*

Here's what this section covers:

## 1. WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE?

- 1.1. What is food waste?
- 1.2. When and where does food waste happen?
- 1.3. What food waste is not
- 1.4. What's the scale of the problem?
- 1.5. What benefits can we expect from reducing food waste?

## 2. WHAT CAN WE DO?

- 2.1. Why is it difficult to reduce food waste?
- 2.2. What tools and approaches are on the table?
- 2.3. What's your role in this process?





## 1. WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE?

### 1.1. What is food waste?

In the European Union, food waste is defined as food that is removed from the food supply chain—whether it is then recycled and transformed into compost or biogas, burnt in an incinerator, or added to a landfill.

This definition of food waste covers both edible and inedible parts. It includes:

- Whole foods or parts of food that people could eat but are thrown away. This could be, for example, milk spilled in a dairy factory; vegetables that your supermarket doesn't sell; bread that you baked at home and didn't eat; or leftovers discarded after a restaurant meal. (This is a fraction of food waste that we could reduce or, ideally, avoid almost completely.)
- Elements associated with food—such as fish bones, eggshells, or fruit pits—that are not intended to be eaten. The notion of “*inedible parts*” varies from one place to another, or from one group to another. For example, some people peel apples while others will eat the whole fruit, including the core and seeds. In some countries, people consider chicken feet as food, and in other places, they'll typically throw them away. (This inedible fraction could be reduced, for instance by avoiding excessive peeling of vegetables, but cannot be avoided. However, we can improve the way we handle and recycle it.)

### 1.2. Where and when does food waste occur?

Food waste occurs across the whole food supply chain. Let's take the example of tomatoes:

- **Production, storage:**

At the farm, after harvest, the tomatoes could be bruised; picked but not sold; damaged by machinery, etc.

- **Processing, packaging:**

After harvest, the tomatoes might be stored in poor conditions; contaminated; damaged due to poor packaging, etc.

- **Distribution, retail:**

The tomatoes might be wasted because they're not sold; rejected because they don't meet certain standards of shape, size, or colour; damaged because they're transported or stored in inappropriate conditions, etc.

- **Consumption:**

The tomatoes might go to the bin at home or in a restaurant kitchen because we didn't store them properly; or we bought too many of them; or we cooked large quantities and didn't eat them, etc.

### 1.3. What food waste is not

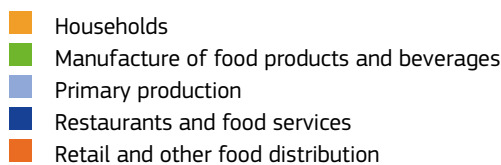
The EU definition of food waste does not include:

- food losses before harvest (for instance when a crop is damaged by bad weather or pests, or simply not harvested);
- by-products from the production of goods that are not intended to be eaten—for instance, remains from almonds used to make oil for cosmetic use;
- food that is not sold for human consumption but is used as animal feed, such as broken biscuits;
- food packaging.

### 1.4. What's the scale of the problem?

Some estimates say that one-third of all food produced in the world intended for human consumption is lost or wasted. Eurostat (the European Union's statistical office) says that, on average, about 127 kg of food waste were generated per inhabitant in the European Union in 2020, across the food supply chain. That represents around 1 kg of food waste per person in the EU every three days.

This food waste comes from different sectors, as shown in the pie chart and in the table below (EU average in 2020):



Food Waste Sector

PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL FOOD WASTE	COMES FROM...	PER INHABITANT
55%	Households	70 kg
18%	Manufacture of food products and beverages	23 kg
11%	Primary production	14 kg
9%	Restaurants and food services	12 kg
7%	Retail and other food distribution	9 kg

Eurostat compiled and published these data in October 2022 for the first time. In several countries, food waste data for 2020 were not available or were only estimated. (This was also a year when the COVID pandemic disrupted food supply chains.)

Under EU law, all Member States are required to measure food waste at each stage of the food supply chain, using a shared methodology. We expect that the quality of the data will continue to improve over time and will allow us to measure progress made in reducing food waste. For the moment, we have to be careful when we consider these figures: they give us a good idea of the scale of the issue, but don't allow us yet to draw detailed comparisons between countries or sectors.

### 1.5. What benefits can we expect from reducing food waste?

Food waste has a large impact on our society, our economy and our environment; some of its costs are indirect and/or not visible. Here are some of the benefits we could expect from reducing food waste:

#### • Food security:

In theory, we could feed more people with the same amount of food produced. We can also save surplus food from being wasted and make it available to those in need.

#### • Savings:

- Consumers could spend less or no money on food that ends up in the bin.

- Companies that make food could save money by buying the right amount of ingredients (although, if supply better matches the demand, some companies might also sell fewer products).

- Retailers could save money by reducing the volume of food they don't sell and throw away (although, if consumers shop more wisely, some retailers might also sell fewer food items).



- Public authorities could save money on waste management services if they process a lower volume of waste.

- **Environment and climate:**

Food systems could become more efficient as we use fewer resources to make and distribute food (including water, land, fertilisers, pesticides and fuel). Reducing food waste would also lower the greenhouse gas emissions from making and distributing food, as well as from food rotting in landfills.

## 2. WHAT CAN WE DO?

### 2.1. Why is it difficult to reduce food waste?

Countries around the world have pledged to halve global per capita food waste at the retail and consumer levels by 2030, and to reduce food losses along the food chain. This was agreed upon at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda; you might hear references to this food waste reduction target as “SDG 12.3”. So far, progress has been insufficient and we’re not on track to reach that goal in eight years.

Within the European Union, all countries have adopted measures to reduce food waste, but their level of ambition and results vary greatly. In practice, few Member States have taken an evidence-based approach when setting targets, implementing practical actions, and monitoring progress.

The EU has also taken measures to help reduce food waste. By the end of 2023, the European Commission will propose legally binding food waste reduction targets to step up action across the Union. However, some Member States may prefer voluntary measures rather than binding targets.

Here are some of the challenges that have been identified:

- Increasing cooperation between public and private organisations to create broad change across our food system.
- Helping consumers to change their habits, for instance when storing food or eating out.
- Encouraging businesses to prioritise food waste reduction and change their practices.



- Ensuring scrupulous food safety while reducing the waste of perishable foods.
- Fighting against food waste and reducing the use of single-use plastic packaging at the same time. (Sometimes, using more food packaging can help to reduce food waste, because it allows us to package smaller portions and to protect food from contamination and damage.)

## 2.2. What tools and approaches are on the table?

Below are just a few examples out of many possible actions that could help reduce food waste. Different groups of people, need to be involved to help us all value and handle food more carefully: this includes consumers, public authorities, businesses, NGOs, and academics. During the event, you will hear about different options and will discuss how to prioritise them.

- Governments could put in place laws, for example to ban the destruction of edible food.
- Public authorities could offer incentives like tax credits for companies and consumers that reduce food waste.
- Public or private organisations, as well as NGOs, could run campaigns, aiming to raise consumers' awareness of food waste and how to reduce it, and to shift what's considered as appropriate behaviour in our society regarding food waste.
- Food manufacturers could (be required to) improve product labels, so that they:
  - Provide more and better information on how to store and handle the product;
  - Clarify date marking, which many consumers don't understand.
- Businesses could make food waste prevention part and parcel of their operations and donate more of the food they don't sell, for example to food banks.
- Restaurants could reduce portion sizes and encourage customers to take their leftovers home.
- At home, consumers could improve the way they plan meals, shop, store and use food. (You'll find more suggestions in the leaflet *"How to reduce food waste in your daily life"* provided in this kit.)

## 2.3. What's your role in this process?

As a member of the citizens' panel, you will receive more information from speakers' presentations. You will be able to discuss the pros and cons of different possible solutions, their feasibility and their importance, according to your individual and collective values.

The outcome of your work will be a list of recommendations that will be passed on to the European Commission in early spring 2023. It will support the Commission's work on food waste—including its future legislative proposal, which will be presented next year as part of a revision of the EU's 2018 Waste Framework Directive. This will then be discussed with the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, which represents the governments of all Member States, until a consensus is reached. At the end of this larger process, a new legislation will be adopted (possibly in 2025, depending on political negotiations). Each EU country will then need to incorporate these new rules in its national law.

**"Best before"** MM-YY means that the food is safe to eat after that date, but its quality may not be optimal.



**"Use by DD-MM"** means that the food is not safe to eat after that date.



# 4. Practical information

*We are looking forward to welcoming you to the citizens' panel of the European Commission on food waste starting on Friday 16 December in Brussels, Belgium. We are pleased to send you the practical information to prepare for your trip and your attendance at the meeting.*

## 1. PER DIEM

Per diems (an allowance to cover living expenses) of 90,00€ per conference and travelling day will be provided. The per diems are paid after participating in the meeting based on an attendance list.

## 2. LOGISTICS

- **Travel arrangements**

You have or will receive your travel itinerary and eTicket. Should you have any further questions regarding your travel arrangements, please let us know by contacting us at [info@futureeu.events](mailto:info@futureeu.events)

- **Transfers**

Transfers upon arrival: Upon your arrival at the airport/train station, hostesses with a citizens' panel welcome board (poster) will welcome you and accompany you to the transfer bus. If you encounter difficulties in finding the hostesses, please call: 00 32 - 478 79 68 53 or 00 32 - 478 79 68 63 between 7:00am and 9:00pm

**By plane:** *At the airport, after picking up your luggage, please make your way to the courtesy desk available at the Arrivals Terminal where our hostesses will be expecting you.*

**By train:** *At the Midi Brussels train station, please make your way to the cafeteria Prêt à Manger where our hostesses with the Conference welcome board and roll-up will be expecting you.*

**Once in Brussels:** *From the hotels to the European Commission premises, group transfers will be organised with a shuttle bus from the hotels to the conference building. Please present yourself at the hotel main hall before the scheduled time of departure. Our team will*

*show you the way to the shuttle. If you prefer to reach the European Commission premises on your own, please nonetheless notify our support team before departing.*

**Once in Brussels:** *From the social event to the hotels. After the meeting, social events may be foreseen and group transfers by a shuttle bus from the European Commission premises to the venue will be organised. After the dinner, group transfers by a shuttle bus from the restaurant to the hotels will be organised.*

**Transfers upon departure:** *We will arrange the transfers back to the airport/train station for all participants from the hotel you are staying at. A notice board will indicate the departure time in the hotel lobby.*

- **Accommodation**

Our team will welcome you upon your arrival at the hotel, provide you with a printed agenda and all relevant information. A single occupancy room, with breakfast and free Wi-Fi has been booked for you. Please refer to your booking email. Kindly note that all extras (e.g. minibar, room service, telephone, hotel bar, laundry service, early check-in or late check-out etc.) are for your own account and will not be covered by the organisers. Please settle all extra expenses directly at the hotel.

**IMPORTANT :** **Official check-in time is 15:00 and check-out time is 12:00 noon on the day of departure. Our staff will be present at the hotel to assist if needed. If you arrive earlier, the hotel will try their best according to the situation of room occupancy. Nonetheless, some waiting time may occur, and you are welcome to leave your luggage and wait at the hotel lobby.**



### 3. MISCELLANEOUS

- **Dress code**

Please bring along smart-casual clothes for the meetings, a warm jacket and a scarf for indoor and a waterproof winter coat as well warm comfortable shoes and umbrellas for outdoor. Temperatures in December will probably be around 6°C and an average low-temperature of 0°C.

- **Drinking water**

The tap water is safe to drink in Belgium. Bottled water or filtered water is readily available for purchase and will be offered during all meetings, meals and social events.

- **Time zone**

Current Time is CET - Central European Time (UTC/GMT +1 hour).

- **Tourism Information**

Brussels is rich in history, architecture, gastronomy, culture and so much more! If you are staying in Brussels during the weekend, do not hesitate to visit the Brussels-Capital Region website to discover all the cultural activities available during your stay.

- **Contact**

Our team will consist of several persons and hostesses who will be available prior and throughout the meeting. Shall you encounter any difficulties upon arrival, your flight departure time has changed, feel free to contact us via e-mail: [info@futureu.events](mailto:info@futureu.events)

- **Interpretation**

The meeting will be available in 24 languages thanks to a team of interpreters. Please pace yourself and avoid speaking too fast during your session.

### 4. ACCESS TO THE BUILDING

The meeting will take place on the premises of the European Commission in Brussels. Please refer to the agenda for more information on the exact buildings and rooms. The European Commission building is accessible with a V-pass. A V-pass e-mail will be sent to you before the event. Please don't forget to register via this e-mail to finalise the process and get your V-pass QR code. If you have not received your V-pass please contact us via e-mail: [info@futureu.events](mailto:info@futureu.events). Please note that it may take at least 20 minutes to complete the security check and to arrive at the meeting room. The security will ask your V-pass and ID card.

**All participants:**

- are required to show a valid passport or ID card before entering the building;
- are required to undergo security controls at the entrance area;
- are advised to carry the invitation letter or any other document clearly indicating their participation (e.g. registration mail)

### 5. HELPDESK, INTERNET ACCESS

A help desk will be located at the entrance of the rooms. Our colleagues and the team of hostesses will assist you to find your way, to receive documents or for any additional questions, you may have. Internet can be accessed via Wi-Fi hotspots which will be shared the day of the meeting.

### 6. ACCESSIBILITY

The premises of the European Commission are fully accessible for people with disabilities. When registering online, please indicate your special need and our services will endeavour to welcome you as best as possible.

# Who is organising this **panel?**

*The Food Waste citizens' panel is organised by the European Commission (The Directorate-General for Communication in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety) and the support of Kantar Public (main contractor) with Missions Publiques, ifok, Deliberativa, the Danish Board of Technology, and VO Europe.*

*The Topic section was produced by a part of the organising team with input from a Knowledge Committee that includes the following members:*

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