

Cutting food waste

Plenary sessions [16-05-2017 - 13:25]

MEPs advocate efforts to halve by 2030 food waste in the EU, by lifting existing restrictions on food donations and eliminating confusion about “best before” and “use by” labels.

- cut food waste by 30% by 2025 and by 50% in 2030
- make food donations easier
- make “best before” and “use by” labels less confusing

“In developed countries food is wasted mostly at the end of the chain, at distribution and consumption. Everyone has a responsibility to tackle this problem”, said lead MEP Biljana Borzan (S&D, HR). “My report calls for a coordinated policy response on labelling, liability and education, as most consumers do not understand the precise meaning of “best before” and “use by” labelling. Moreover, we should address the shortcomings of existing EU legislation where it hinders food donations”, she added. Her resolution was adopted on Tuesday by 623 votes to 33, with 20 abstentions.

MEPs call on EU countries to achieve food waste cuts of 30% by 2025 and a further 50% by 2030 (compared to 2014) - an objective Parliament introduced in waste legislation voted in March.

National authorities and stakeholders should do more to help consumers to understand “use by” and “best before” labels, including the fact that food can be eaten after the “best before” date. The Commission will have to assess the possible benefits of removing certain dates for products without any risk to public health or the environment.

Facilitate food donations

The Commission should also propose a change in the VAT Directive that would explicitly authorise tax exemptions on food donations. The EU Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) should be used to finance the cost of collecting, transporting, storing and distributing food donations.

Facts

In the EU, food waste has been estimated at some 88 million tonnes, or 173 kg per capita per year. The production and disposal of this food waste leads to the emission of 170 million tonnes of CO₂ and consumes 26 million tonnes of resources.

Procedure: Non-legislative resolution

Further information

- Steps of the procedure: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2016/2223\(INI\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2016/2223(INI)&l=en)
- EP rapporteur Biljana Borzan (S&D, HR): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/112748.html>
- Adopted text (2016/2223(INI)) will soon be available here (15.05.2017): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 15.05.2017): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>
- Video of the press conference : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/schedule>
- EP Research: tackling food waste, the EU’s contribution to a global issue: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/593563/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)593563_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/593563/EPRS_BRI(2016)593563_EN.pdf)
- EU-Fusions project study: <http://bit.ly/2g0w43N>

Press release

- EbS+ (15.05.2017) : <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm?sitelang=en&page=3&institution=0&date=05/15/2017>
- Audiovisual material for professionals: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/food-waste>

Political groups

- News pages of the EPP group: <http://bit.ly/1WuQLqB>
- Press release by the S&D group: <http://bit.ly/2rbx4L9>
- News pages of the ECR group: <http://bit.ly/1Y0YFrj>
- News pages of the ALDE group: <http://bit.ly/2ikk6qK>
- Press release by the GUE/NGL group: <http://bit.ly/2rmyzn4>
- Press release by the Greens/EFA group: <http://bit.ly/2qnuT6y>
- News pages of the EFDD group: <http://bit.ly/1TUuDFU>
- News pages of the ENF group: <http://bit.ly/2cxzxcR>

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