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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Waste framework Directive – Food related aspects - <i>Information from the Presidency and the Commission</i> - <i>Exchange of views</i>

Delegations will find in the annex the Presidency background document containing questions to steer the exchange of views among Ministers on the above-mentioned subject at the Council meeting ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 23-24 October 2023.

Waste framework Directive - food related aspects**- Presidency background document**

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets a target of halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels by 2030 and reducing food losses along the production and supply chain, including post-harvest losses, as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3¹.

In its conclusions adopted on 28 June 2016², the Council acknowledged that reducing food losses and waste was a global challenge requiring global, regional and local action, and called upon Member States to confirm their commitment to the achievement of SDG 12.3. It also called upon the Commission to take initiatives, including to better integrate the prevention of food losses and waste throughout the value chain.

The Waste Framework Directive,³ adopted in 2008, sets the basic concepts and definitions related to waste management at EU level. In 2018, it was amended by Directive (EU) 2018/851, which introduced an obligation for the Member States to develop specific programmes for the prevention of food waste, as part of the waste prevention programmes.

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/>.

² 10730/16.

³ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain directives.

On 5 July 2023, the Commission submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council a proposal with further amendments to the Waste Framework Directive, including legally binding targets for reducing food waste. This is one of the commitments outlined in the Farm to Fork Strategy. Likewise, the proposal aims to contribute to the commitment of the EU and its Member States to achieve the SDG 12.3.

The proposal defines food waste reduction targets at Member State level, to be achieved by 31 December 2030, as follows:

- In the “transformation” stage: by 10%, compared to what was generated in 2020.
- In the stages of “retail sales and distribution”, “restaurants and food services” and “households”, together 30% (in units per capita), compared to what was generated in 2020.

The proposal does not include targets for the “primary production” stage. In the Impact Assessment, the Commission concludes that waste in primary production is collateral to inefficiencies in the food chain that are beyond the control of farmers, such as meteorology or the market.

The proposal also contains provisions regarding the “Food waste prevention programmes” of Member States and measures to be taken by the Member States to prevent the generation of food waste in primary production, processing and manufacturing, retail and other distribution of food and in households. Those measures include the following:

- developing behavioural change interventions and information campaigns to raise awareness about food waste prevention,
- identifying and addressing inefficiencies in the functioning of the food supply chain and supporting cooperation amongst all actors, while ensuring a fair distribution of costs and benefits of prevention measures,
- encouraging food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products,
- supporting training and skills’ development as well as facilitating access to funding opportunities, particularly for small and medium sized enterprises and social economy actors.

Furthermore, the proposal foresees that the Commission will review by the end of 2027 the degree of compliance with the targets, with a view to proceeding, where appropriate, to modify them, extend them to other stages of the food supply chain or establish new targets beyond 2030.

The Presidency notes that the proposal is very important for the agri-food sector. The fact that the proposal directly affects the food chain is very notable, particularly because reduction targets are set in specific stages of the food chain.

In view of the above, the Presidency considers it relevant to hold an exchange of views on the proposal in the AGRIFISH Council, after a presentation by the Commission.

The Presidency proposes to focus the debate on the food related issues, based on the following questions:

- 1.- Regarding its elements related to food waste, what is your assessment of the proposal?
- 2.- Which tools do you consider the most appropriate to achieve the objectives of the proposal regarding food waste?