



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 28.7.2014

C(2014) 5428 final

Dear Chairman,

The Commission would like to thank the House of Lords for its Opinion on EU food waste prevention.

The Commission welcomes the detailed observations and suggestions made by the House of Lords concerning the prevention and reduction of food waste in the European Union.

The Commission would like to address the 26 specific paragraphs of the House of Lords' report which have been highlighted as particularly relevant and on which the Commission's views have been requested.

In paragraphs 32, 57, 177 and 178 the House of Lords stressed that a universal definition of "food waste" is not available, thus making it impossible to set overarching binding targets. Moreover, the House of Lords states that non-binding EU action should precede any consideration of legislative action. The Commission considers that a definition of different waste flows with different material at each stage of the food supply chain is overly complex to implement. Therefore, it has proposed, on 2 July 2014, a general definition of food waste alongside a requirement for Member States to prepare food waste prevention plans with the objective of reducing food waste by at least 30% between 2017 and 2025. This would be implemented alongside a new data collection and monitoring programme for food waste.

In paragraphs 97 and 107 the House of Lords called for more cross-departmental cooperation in this matter within the Commission, and the establishment of a working group. The Commission would like to recall that, in 2012, it established a working group of European stakeholder organisations (farmers, food manufacturers, retailers, consumer and other NGOs) dedicated to the issue of food waste. This working group has helped the Commission to identify the best possible actions to take at EU level and to support sharing of best practices. The Commission is considering complementing this work through convening, in 2014, experts from national authorities in order to identify opportunities for food waste prevention across the food production and consumption chain.

In paragraphs 45, 85 and 102 the House of Lords called for more voluntary action by economic stakeholders, including careful consideration of purchasing contracts. The Commission considers that the impetus for such action should come from businesses involved rather than from the Commission.

*Lord BOSWELL
Chairman of the European Union Select Committee
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In paragraphs 42, 115, 116, 120, 133, 136, 141, 145, 150, 151, 155, 157, 161, 162, and 176 the House of Lords gave examples for the cross-cutting nature of a policy to reduce food waste, urging that the issue should be looked at in the application and implementation of various policies and legislation, including food, feed, waste, agriculture, statistics, fisheries, taxes (VAT), and packaging. The Commission agrees that the issue of food waste is a cross-cutting dossier and would like to reassure the House of Lords that it has been raised and addressed in many of the areas mentioned. Many of the issues outlined in the House of Lords' Opinion, such as the need to facilitate food donations and the simplification of date marking, are currently being considered and under discussion with both Member States and stakeholders.

In paragraphs 127 and 169 the House of Lords stressed the need for more effective research in order to ensure evidence-based policy making. The Commission agrees with this view and is committed to ensuring that all policy-measures are based on good science and a thorough understanding of the causes and impacts of the measures.

The House of Lords' Opinion on EU food waste prevention will make an important contribution to the Commission's work on food waste and the Commission looks forward to continuing co-operation with the House of Lords in this regard.

The Commission hopes that this reply addresses the issues raised by the House of Lords and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maroš Šefčovič', with a stylized flourish at the end.

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*