

**Side-Event of the European Regional Conference on
“Food Wastage Footprint: the Hidden costs”
Bucharest, Romania, 2 April 2014**

**Summary
by
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Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you all for engaging in this vibrant and inspiring discussion. Special thanks go to the panellists for their excellent and insightful presentations. I will try to summarize the results of today's discussion.

First: the results of Ms. Scialabba's study underlined the urgent need to put the topic of food wastage high on the political agenda. The hidden cost of loss and waste are so high that we are urged to mobilize appropriate resources to address this issue.

Second: the issue is complex. There are many starting points for interventions, in particular with investment in better production methods and improved mechanization at farm level, in storage facilities or in improved handling of food. Here, we could not only quickly and significantly reduce food loss and waste at reasonable cost, but also create many additional benefits, such as improved production efficiency and food safety.

Third: all speakers emphasized the issue of reusing food, for example by using leftovers (of meals) as animal feed. In fact, there is still considerable potential to tap. Nevertheless, we must recognize that there are limitations to this approach too. For example, due to the risk of spreading animal diseases, veterinary legislation prevents us from feeding leftovers to pigs.

Fourth: we talked a lot about the impact market legislation, such as technical product standards or date labelling (best-before date) could have on the amount of food loss and waste. A lot of food is being wasted only for the reason that it does not match certain technical standards (size or shape of fruits and vegetables) or that the “best before” date has already been passed. We must make legislators aware of this interrelation and urge them to take this into due account.

Fifth: we all agreed that awareness raising is most important. We also recognized that the attempt to change consumers' attitudes is a challenging endeavour and needs time as well as endurance. But once your efforts will show some success, change in consumers' attitudes will prove to be most sustainable and will bear major benefits.

I'd like to close here and without further ado, thank you for all your contributions to today's event.