

Statement on EU targets for manufacturing and processing food waste

We, the undersigned, call on the European Commission, European Council, and European Parliament to support legally binding targets to reduce manufacturing and processing food waste by at least 20% by 2030, in the upcoming trilogue negotiations.

An estimated 40% of food is wasted globally¹, which causes an estimated 8–10% of global emissions², and uses an estimated 28% of the world’s agricultural land area, larger than China and India combined³. [Project Drawdown](#) lists food waste prevention as one of the top 5 biggest opportunities for reducing global emissions.

Upcoming trilogues between the European Commission, Parliament and Council will decide on the scope and ambition of legally binding food waste targets for EU member states, as part of the revised Waste Framework Directive. This presents a historic opportunity to tackle food waste, unlocking significant benefits for emissions reduction, food security and biodiversity.

EU countries pledged in 2015 to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030⁴. Through the revised Waste Framework Directive in 2018, the EU re-affirmed its commitment to meet SDG 12.3. Champions 12.3 recommend that states should interpret SDG 12.3 target as a 50% reduction in all food loss and waste from farm to fork, including manufacturing food waste⁵. The UNFSS Coalition on Food is Never Waste recommends at least 25% reduction targets for “food loss”⁶.

Currently, the European Commission and Council have proposed modest targets for the manufacturing and processing industry – a 10% reduction in manufacturing and processing food waste by 2030.

The European Parliament proposed 20% food waste reduction targets for manufacturing and processing. In March 2024, MEPs voted for these 20% targets by a large majority – providing a very strong mandate for negotiations.

The evidence is significant and compelling that 20% reductions in manufacturing food waste by 2030 are achievable by companies in EU member states – a target which would require 2% per year reductions from a 2020 baseline. The UK has achieved a 27.4% reduction in manufacturing food waste over 10 years, indicating that reductions of 20% are feasible. Beyond this, many of the world’s largest processors and manufacturers have proved that far faster levels of reduction are possible – consistent with a 30% reduction or higher by 2030 – demonstrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Food waste reductions achieved by key companies/sectors in processing and manufacturing

Country/Business	Annual food waste reduction achieved (%)	Start year – End year	Total % reduction achieved over period
G’s Fresh (growing, packing, and processing sites in Spain & UK) ⁷	21%	2018 – 2020	43% over 2 years
Kellogg Company* (global manufacturing operations) ⁸	7%	2016 – 2022	42% over 6 years
Danone* (processing and supply chain) ⁹	6.8%	2020 – 2022	13.5% over 2 years
Unilever* (global direct operations) ¹⁰	5.6%	2019 – 2022	17% over 3 years
Campbell’s (processing and manufacturing) ¹¹	3.5%	2017 – 2022	18% over 5 years

McCain (global direct operations) ¹²	3.2%	2020 – 2023	9.5% over 3 years
UK manufacturing sector (whole sector) ¹³	2.7%	2011 – 2021	27.4% over 10 years

* Food waste percentage reductions presented per tonne food handled for this company.

In addition to this, many more manufacturing businesses have committed to achieving 50% reductions in food waste in their businesses in the future, including Mars¹⁴, Nestlé¹⁵, among others, indicating that they regard this as feasible. The EU Commission’s Impact Assessment seems to base its 10% targets on claims by some manufacturers that “potential for further reduction” is “limited”¹⁶. There does seem to be significant evidence to the contrary.

Furthermore, a 20% target for manufacturing and processing food waste would be more in line with the 25% reduction targets for “food loss” recommended by the UNFSS Coalition on Food is Never Waste¹⁷.

Toine Timmermans, former coordinator for EU FUSIONS and EU REFRESH (flagship EU food waste programmes) and now Director at Stichting Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling (Netherlands’ voluntary food waste agreement), has said “I would urge EU policymakers to raise the extremely low targets for manufacturing to at least 20%”, saying it “should certainly be set far higher than 10% – a target this low won’t give incentives to the sector to speed up actions and is a huge missed opportunity.”

In summary, we call on EU policymakers to support legally binding targets for EU member states to reduce manufacturing and processing food waste by at least 20% by 2030, in the upcoming trilogue negotiations. These targets are vital to serve EU aims on climate change and food security, and are feasible within the timeframes proposed.

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Please note: For academic signatories, support is given in individual capacity, not on behalf of institution

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