

France's law for fighting food waste

Food Waste Prevention Legislation

[LOI n° 2016-138 du 11 février 2016 relative à la lutte contre le gaspillage alimentaire](#)

In February 2016, France adopted a pioneering law on fighting food waste that meant supermarkets were forbidden to destroy unsold food products and were compelled to donate it instead. This law constituted the starting point of the fight against food waste through banning its destruction and facilitating donation. Since the adoption, its scope has been extended further, as defined through new decrees and laws.

FRANCE

Level: National

Population: 67 million inhabitants

Key characteristic: 18% of the food produced is wasted (EU average is 20%)

FOOD WASTE IN FRANCE

Although France wastes less food than the EU average, food waste happens in a more balanced way across the full food supply chain. In the EU, 53% of food waste happens at the consumer level, while in France it only accounts for 33%, which includes collective catering and restaurants. Another 14% happens at the retail level while the rest is happening during the production and process steps.

THE LAW'S OBJECTIVES

The original law adopted in 2016 aims to avoid food waste through incentivising food donation and forbidding the destruction of unsold food products. It focused on the retail sector first to limit food waste in the sector as a whole, but also established a frame for food waste prevention through the adoption of a food waste hierarchy. Then, several other provisions were adopted through decrees and laws strengthening and widening the scope of the 2016 law to catering and food distribution but also through general objectives to reduce food waste by 50% by 2025.

MAIN MEASURES

Legislative act	Measures
LOI n° 2016-138 du 11 février 2016 relative à la lutte contre le gaspillage alimentaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of an anti-food waste action hierarchy in the following order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food waste prevention through discounts and awareness raising... ○ Donation to charity organisations ○ Animal feed ○ Composting or anaerobic digestion ○ Disposal • Obligation to establish a partnership with a charity organisation to donate unsold food products, for supermarkets of more than 400 m² • Food retailers are forbidden to destroy unsold food products still fit for consumption
Ordonnance n° 2019-1069 du 21 octobre 2019 relative à la lutte contre le gaspillage alimentaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the obligation to donate unsold food products to mass catering (preparing more than 3,000 meals a day) and the food industry (whose annual turnover exceeds €50 million) • Extension of the ban of destruction of unsold food products fit for consumption to mass catering and the food industry • Obligation to offer a doggy-bag option for commercial catering • Obligation for some actors in the food industry and mass catering sector to make publicly available their commitment to reduce food waste
LOI n° 2020-105 du 10 février 2020 relative à la lutte contre le gaspillage et à l'économie circulaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fines for destroying unsold food products fit for consumption are strengthened: can reach up to 0.1% of the annual turnover against €3,750 previously • "Best before" and "Use by" dates will have to be integrated in the product codification to optimise the logistics

LIMITS OF THE LEGISLATION

- The obligation to donate unsold food products does not specify the quantity hence 1% can be sufficient.
- Only targets a part of the supply chain and misses pre-retail steps.

LINK TO THE EU LEGISLATION

[Directive 2008/98/EC on waste \(Waste Framework Directive\)](#)



Ban the destruction of unsold food waste fit for human consumption



Obligation to establish partnership with charities for food donation



Obligation for specific actors to display their commitment on food waste

For more good practices, check the [Zero Waste Europe website](#) or the [European Environmental Bureau's brief on the economic incentives to reduce waste](#).

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Zero Waste Europe is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards the elimination of waste in our society. We advocate for sustainable systems and the redesign of our relationship with resources, to accelerate a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and planet.



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