

A United Stand Against Food Waste

Submitted by [wweuro](#) on Wed, 31/10/2012 - 17:51

by [Selina Juul](#)

Food waste is a indication of that there is something fundamentally wrong with our human civilization. FAO estimates that the global food waste can feed every starving child, man, and woman in the world - three times over.

Fight the future

The future of our civilization is facing severe challenges. Not only climate change, but the rising issues with growing demand for the world's resources such as food, water, and energy. The pre-Rio+20 UN report "Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing" states that in just 20 years, Earth's population will need at least 50% more food, 45% more energy and 30% more water. Already by 2030, we will need 2 planets to sustain our consumption.

The countries of the EU are wasting 89 million tonnes of food every year. This is equivalent to 179 kg for every EU citizen – and EU forecasts indicate that European food waste will increase by 42% over the next eight years; it will send food waste in Europe to astronomical 126 million tonnes per year. We must act today – and fortunately, help is on its way.



The power of consumers

In my recent TEDxCopenhagen Talk, I addressed the problem of food waste through the eyes of a consumer. While the food waste in developing countries is caused by post harvest food losses, food waste in developed countries is mainly caused by retailers and consumers.

As a consumer, you can do a great deal to fight food waste. By doing so, you can both reduce your CO₂ emissions *and* save your money: a win-win situation. First of all, you have to remember that as a consumer you have a great power: you have power over the retailers - they do not have power over you. While most of the retailers want to force their customers to buy more food than they actually need, the consumers have the power to buy only what they actually need. Planning, shopping lists, cooking of leftovers, and sharing food with neighbors are some examples of good tools against food waste. The main objective is to stop being a "Consumer Zombie" – and start buying only what you actually need – and use all of what you have bought.

In European countries such as Denmark, consumers have taken a remarkable stand and are taking action against food waste. Our organisation *Stop Wasting Food Movement* - Denmark's largest non-profit consumer movement against food waste – has contributed to this constructive development of influencing public opinion. Four years ago, when the movement was founded, there was not much talk about food waste in Denmark. Today, "food waste" has become one of the central buzzwords in the media - and politicians, as well as the European Parliament and FAO are taking action.

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European Alliance Against Food Waste

But consumers cannot fight food waste alone. All stakeholders must be involved: farmers, industry, retailers, canteens, restaurants, and food services. A new EU project, which teams up 21 partners (including *Stop Wasting Food Movement*), will take a joint stand against food waste.

A 4-year European cooperation against food waste FUSIONS (Food Use of Social Innovation by Optimising Waste Prevention Strategies). Among the 21 Partners from 13 European countries involved are universities, institutions, NGOs, companies, and FAO. The project is funded by the European Commission's FP7. More than 80 European organizations have expressed their support for the FUSIONS. The project is the world's first joint and transnational action against food waste.

The initial objective of the project is to standardize the measurement of food waste. The next aim is to create a European platform of governmental and non-governmental organizations and companies from the food chain, i.e. industry, retailers and consumer organizations. The platform aims to provide simplified data that can identify and evaluate new initiatives to reduce food waste. Furthermore, the results will be disseminated to the public, and the development of technical and policy recommendations to the entire value chain and the EU. The platform will then activate, engage, and support the main stakeholders in the European food value chain in order to deliver a reduction of 50% of food waste by 2020.

We must stand united against food waste to ensure the green future of our civilization.

Watch the TEDx talk:

<http://www.worldwatch-europe.org/node/120>

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Selina Juul is the Founder of Stop Wasting Food movement Denmark (Stop Spild Af Mad)

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Juergen Knirsch