

European Food Banks in a post COVID-19 Europe



July / 2020



In this report

A challenging period for Food Banks



European Food Banks remain open to prevent food waste and redistribute good food



European Food Banks experience an increase in the demand for food aid



European Food Banks respond to the needs of charitable organizations and people in need

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Europe hard. Since the beginning of the outbreak, from Tromsø to Malta, from Lisbon to Kiev, Food Banks across Europe have made an extraordinary effort to recover surplus food to assist charitable organizations and feed people in need.

In Europe in the last 4 months the COVID-19 crisis has brought not only grief and suffering but also a new food emergency. **The demand for food has increased up to 50% compared to the pre-coronavirus period.** The outlook for the coming months is certainly not better.

In 2019, Eurostat estimated that 5.6% of the population (around 24 million people) in the European Union were severely materially deprived¹. **Now millions more people are in need and for the first time they are asking for help to put something to eat at the table.** Due to the crisis caused by COVID-19, it can be expected that in 2020 the trend of severely materially deprived people will dramatically rise.

The European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) daily supported its members in this challenging period. From 16 March to

¹ Eurostat, [Material deprivation statistics](#) – early results. Data extracted in April 2020.

31 May, FEBA had contacts with more than 80 corporations, foundations, and organizations. In this regard, 26 corporations, foundations and organizations already committed to donate €4.4 million. Over €3 million were already redistributed to 19 FEBA members to cover unexpected costs and meet concrete needs. In addition to this, 13 companies committed to donate food or in-kind support for the benefit of 15 members.

FEBA shared learnings and coordination organizing 7 meetings for its membership, conducted 3 surveys to assess the situation and have a comprehensive overview on the situation of European Food Banks and restlessly continued to organize workshops, working groups and skill-sharing sessions. In fact, at the beginning of the crisis FEBA organized a skill-sharing session on SDGs & Partnerships (link to the report [here](#)) during and after COVID-19, and 2 online workshops and 7 virtual tours of the project on “Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks – From Farm to Fork” (link to the dedicated webpage [here](#)).

In addition, on 9 June 2020, FEBA organized an online EU Working Group meeting, with the participation of almost 40 participants, including Food Banks from 18 different countries and policy officers of the European Commission and a representative from the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policy.

Moreover, FEBA daily updated its membership on the developments at EU level especially regarding the FEAD

amendments and the release of the Farm to Fork Strategy, as well as all the measures adopted by the European Union to cope with the social and economic crisis. On the occasion of Europe Day, FEBA was involved in the social campaign organized by the European Commission in collaboration with the European Parliament to celebrate the citizens across the continent doing their part in the fight against coronavirus.

Finally, after launching at the beginning of the pandemic a European COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund, as an effort to secure the activity of European Food Banks and address the social emergency today and in the future, FEBA continued to update the dedicated [webpage](#) with news from the network.

On 5 May 2020, 2 months after the breakout of the coronavirus, FEBA circulated a second survey to its membership in order to have an updated overview on how the situation evolved and assess the new main challenges and needs for European Food Banks.

In this report FEBA presents the aggregated results of the survey completed by 24 members of the organization: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine. The results refer to the period April-May 2020.



Current situation of Food Banks daily activities in Europe

The 430 Food Banks operating in Europe have done everything possible, despite a thousand difficulties, to continue the redistribution of food to the charities that every day meet the need of fathers, mothers, elderly and young people. At the same time, many people have helped Food Banks: citizens, businesses, and public administrations. The river of poverty continues to swell, and the risk of overflowing is high.

This situation requires the daily search for a challenging balance between the right to health and the right to food. However, despite the challenges, this can also be a time of innovation and creativity to meet concrete needs.

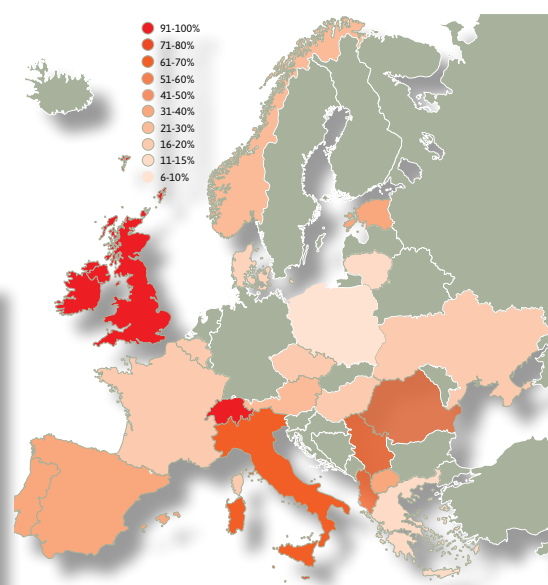
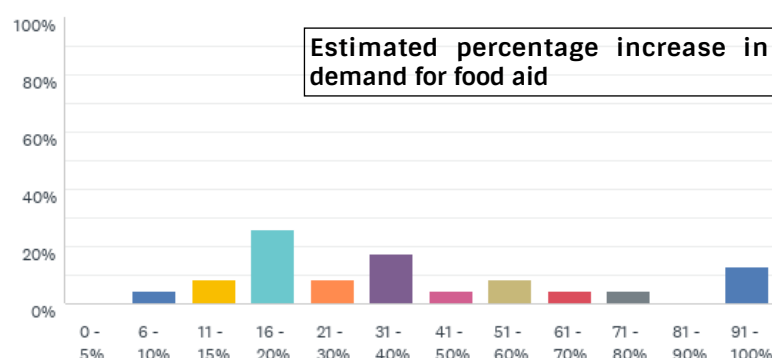
→ European Food Banks remain open to prevent food waste and redistribute good food

100% of respondents declared that their Food Banks are in operation. European Food Banks are carrying out their daily activity while ensuring social distancing guidelines and respecting the strict hygienic requirements imposed by national authorities to ensure safety and avoid the risk of spreading the pandemic.

→ European Food Banks experience an increase in the demand for food aid

Over 90% of European Food Banks are experiencing an increase in demand for emergency food assistance, resulting from an increase in the total number of people in need, especially of food.

- **91-100%** declared by almost the 15% of the respondents
- **31-40%** declared by almost the 20% of the respondents
- **16-20%** declared by almost the 30% of the respondents

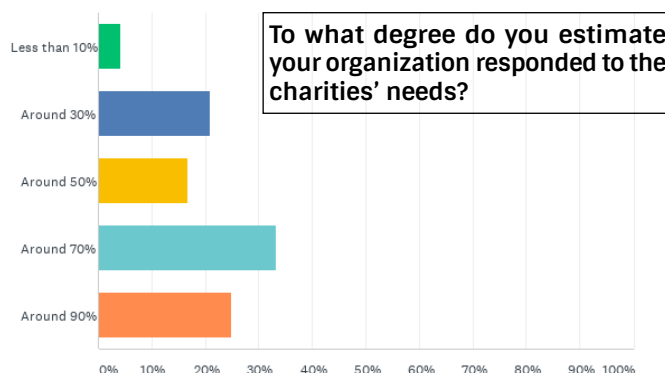


Note: Tafel Deutschland e.V. didn't answer to the question about the increase in food demand.

→ European Food Banks respond to the needs of charitable organizations and people in need

The total **100% of the respondents** declared that the **demand for food aid from the charities increased.**

Additionally, **56% of the respondents** declared that the **relationship with charities changed in this period, due to the urgent needs to face the increased demand for food aid in every European country.**





Urgent needs of European Food Banks in a post COVID-19 Europe

The previous report (link [here](#)) highlighted an **increased demand for food, a shortage of volunteers and a drop in financial resources**. After the first 2 months of crisis, Food Banks adapted to the new contexts to face in the best way possible the increased requests for help and the extra tons of surplus food to recover and redistribute.

From the survey conducted at the end of May emerges that almost **70%** of European Food Banks in the past two months:

- Managed to recruit **additional volunteers** and/or employees to ensure the continuity of the activity
- Managed to find **protective devices** (e.g. masks, disposable gloves, hand sanitizer dispensers, equipment such as isothermal boxes etc.)
- Started **new collaborations** with corporates
- **Reinvigorated** already existing collaborations with corporates

The social and economic crisis caused by Covid-19 is already evident and Food Banks in Europe will play a crucial role in the upcoming months and years. Food Banks adapted to the new context planning to face the current and future challenges where food demand will dramatically increase in every country. As a respondent from UK declared in the survey: *"It is post lockdown that we are worried about where the recession will place a lot more people at risk of food insecurity"*.

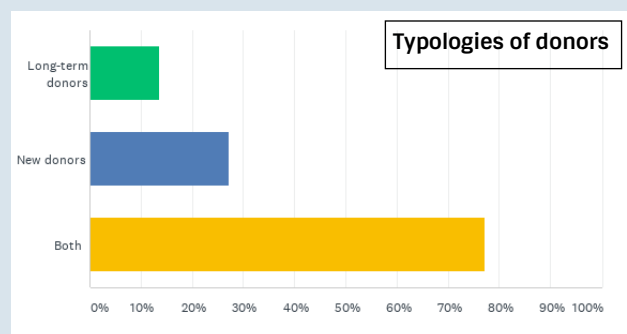
As regards **the need of volunteers and/or employees**, at the beginning of the crisis 42% of Food Banks declared a shortage due to the age of the volunteers and the restrictions imposed by authorities. During the crisis, almost 70% of European Food Banks managed to find new human resources to carry on the activity. **More than 50% of the respondents declared that they would continue to involve these new young volunteers in Food Banks' activities for the upcoming period.**

In relation to **fundraising and financial needs**, at the beginning of the crisis 76% of Food Banks declared that they were experiencing a drop in financial resources.

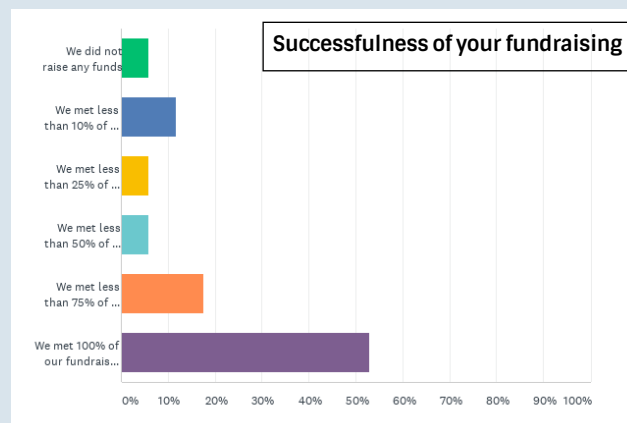
European Food Banks face unexpected costs and experience a drop in financial resources.

In the survey at the beginning of the crisis, European Food Banks declared that they were facing unexpected costs and experiencing a drop in financial resources. Almost 80% of respondents highlighted that additional funding was needed during that period to ensure that Food Banks could continue to safely provide food and to scale up operations where necessary.

After two months, the majority of European Food Banks declared that they received funds from **corporates (83%), foundations (61%), individuals (78%) and institutional bodies (34%)**.



To cope with the unexpected costs and the drop in financial resources, more than 80% of the respondents highlighted that they engaged in fundraising activities during the past two months.



During the period from the beginning of the crisis up to know, the majority of Food Banks (**80%**) received support by new and old donors, corporates, and foundations and more than **95%** of the total respondents declared that they will continue collaborating with partners and corporates that supported Food Banks during the emergency establishing long-lasting partnerships also for the post-COVID period.

At the same time, 74% of European Food Banks will continue almost everywhere successful fundraising activities and plan new ones to ensure the activity of Food Banks in the social and economic emergency Europe is facing.

Every Food Bank in Europe experienced an increase in the demand for food aid, and every Food Bank is redistributing more than the double of usual surplus food to charities. Only in the first months of 2020 the majority of Food Banks doubled the amount of food redistributed in 2019.

As a consequence, new volunteers and employees, and financial support, food donations and new partnerships play an important role to support Food Banks to respond the challenges ahead.

Today the support of Food Banks is more and more essential to meet the needs of charities and the most deprived. Food Banks are a reliable partner not only to feed those in need but first of all to support the food supply chain. They have demonstrated to be able to adapt to an unprecedented and unexpected situation, playing a key role in preventing food waste for a social purpose.

You can find the detailed results of the survey in the annex [here](#).



I think that everyone now has to play its own part to do good. If a doctor is saving a life, if a scientist is studying a vaccine, I can take care of bringing food to those who don't have any.



**Anna, 26 years old,
volunteer at Fondazione
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