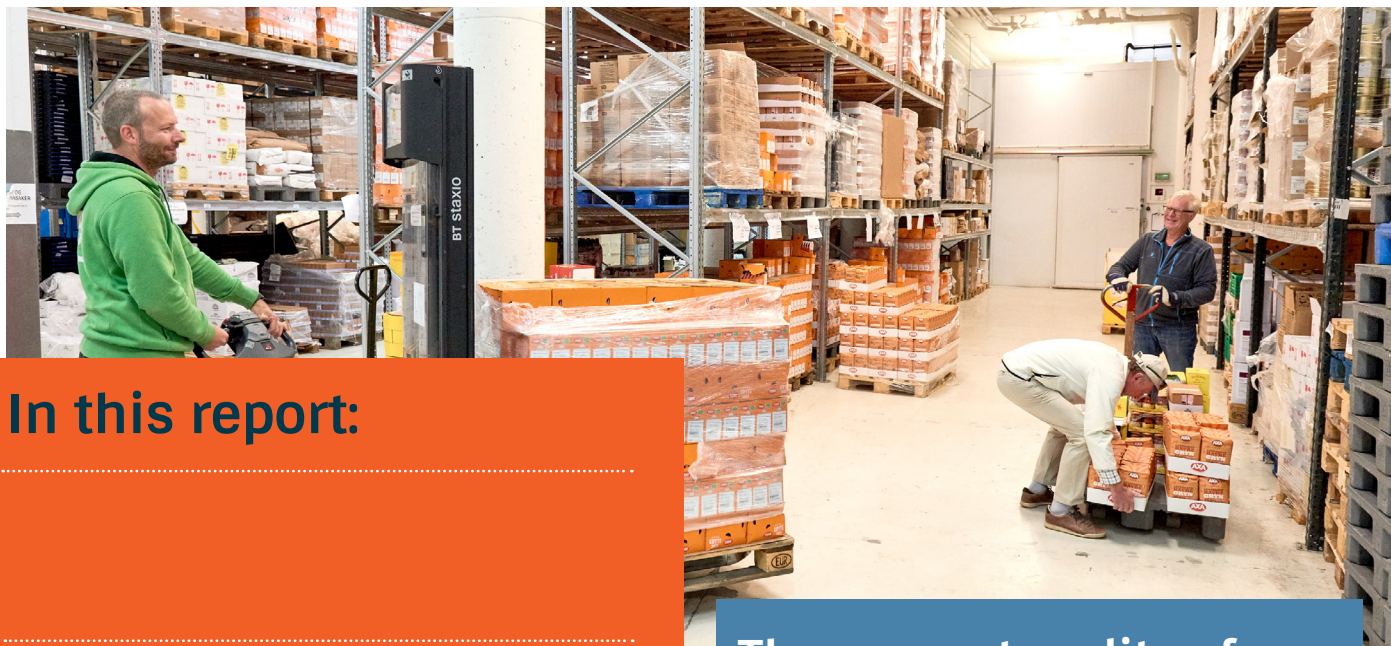


European Food Banks today: commitment, creativity, and openness to change



September / 2020



In this report:

The present reality of European Food Banks

Even during the unexpected and unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, Food Banks belonging to the European Food Banks Federation are showing evidence to be resilient through their daily **dedication and determination**.

The context can vary from country to country, but all European Food Banks are showing similar **challenges such as the growing demand for food, the loss of volunteers, and a drop in financial resources**. Despite all these difficulties, Food Banks are expressing their full commitment, creativity, and openness to change. They continue **to ensure the activity while adapting and innovating their actions to this new 'normal'**.

They are a **reliable partner not only to support charities helping those in need but first of all to support the food supply chain**. Food Banks have quickly adapted to an increasingly complex environment and are responding to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 by keeping the chain of solidarity alive.

In the latest report, the European Food Banks Federation reported an increase in food demand up to 50% compared to the pre-coronavirus period. Today European Food Banks are slightly less impacted, but they are still experiencing **a growing food demand of 30%** at European level. The outlook for the coming months and years is certainly not better.

The European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) has daily supported its members in this challenging period. In March 2020 FEBA launched **a COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund** and since then FEBA has been collaborating with more than 94 corporations, foundations, and organizations. In this regard, 42 corporations, foundations and organizations, as well as many citizens have committed to donate about €4.5 million¹ toward a €10 million fundraising goal. About € 4 million have already been redistributed to 27 FEBA members to cover unexpected costs and meet concrete needs. In addition to this, many companies committed to donate food or in-kind support (transports, personal protective equipment, carton boxes, etc.) for the benefit of Food Banks.

FEBA **fostered coordination and shared learnings** organizing 9 meetings for its membership, conducted 3 surveys to assess the situation and to have a comprehensive overview on the conditions 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.

Moreover, **FEBA launched a project on “Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks – From Farm to Fork”** with 4 online workshops and 7 virtual tours (link to the dedicated webpage [here](#)).

In addition, FEBA **disseminated information on European developments** through its EU Working Group. On 9 June

2020 FEBA organized an online meeting of the EU Working Group, 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. The day after the conclusion of the European Council of July 2020, FEBA convened an extraordinary EU Working Group with the participation of almost 20 participants from 12 Food Banks. The goal of this meeting was to take stock of the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government and coordinate the next steps for Food Banks at European level. Things are running fast in Brussels, therefore soon after the summer break an enlarged EU Working Group was organised on 7 September 2020 to have a discussion on what's at stake for European Food Banks in the future, on strategies to address as a network and to define a joint plan of actions.

After the breakout of the pandemic, FEBA circulated 2 surveys: the [first one](#) soon after the beginning of the pandemic, and the [second one](#) at the beginning of July 2020.

This report features the present reality of European Food Banks. Based on a survey circulated in August and with results received from 26 members – Albania, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, and United Kingdom – it aims to recount the impact of the COVID-19.

The European Food Banks Federations wants to thank all those members who participated in the survey. Furthermore, a grateful acknowledgement for their ongoing activity which makes a difference every day and contributes to food waste prevention and food insecurity reduction.

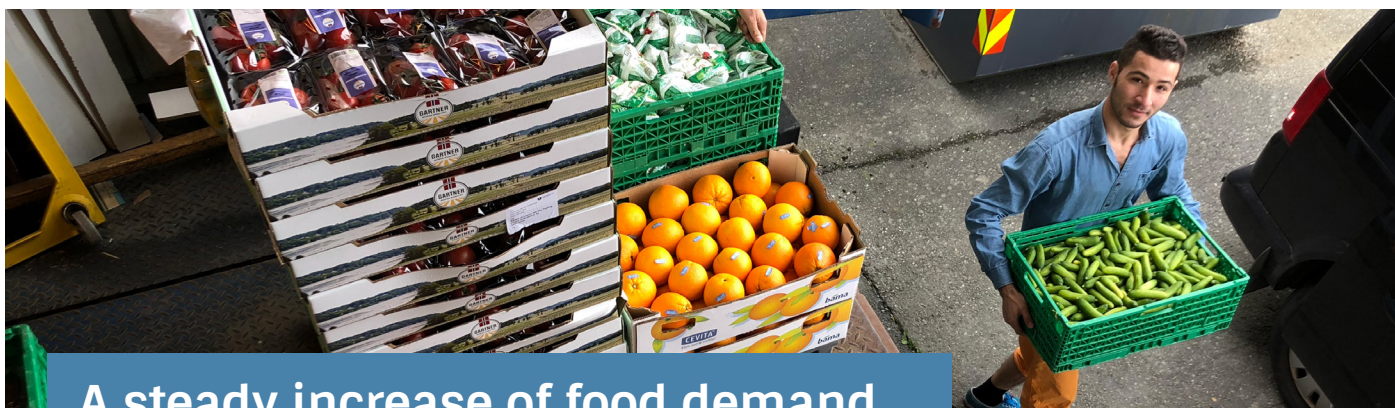
European Food Banks are fully operational

Since the beginning of the pandemic, almost all the European Food Banks have remained open.

At the beginning of September 2020, **100%** of respondents declared that **Food Banks are up and running**.

European Food Banks are carrying out their daily activity while ensuring social distancing and respecting the strict hygienic requirements imposed by national authorities without lowering the guard to ensure safety and avoid the risk of spreading the pandemic.

¹ Despite an increased number of corporations, foundations and organizations as well as citizens that made donations to support FEBA COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund, the total amount of donations has slightly increased in comparison with the report published in July 2020 due to a correction of the actual exchange rates (EUR/USD/GBP).

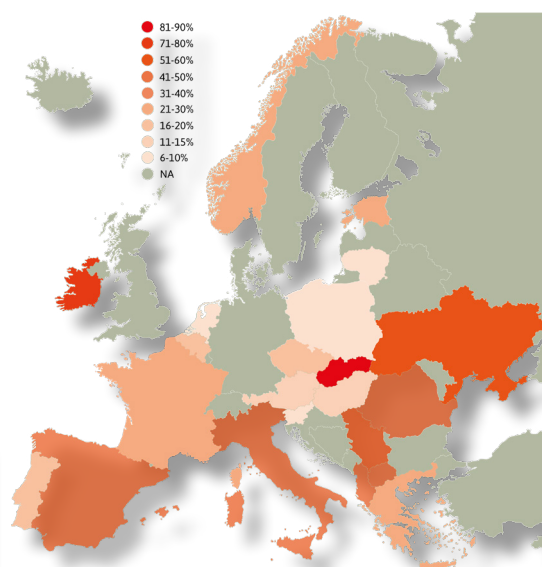
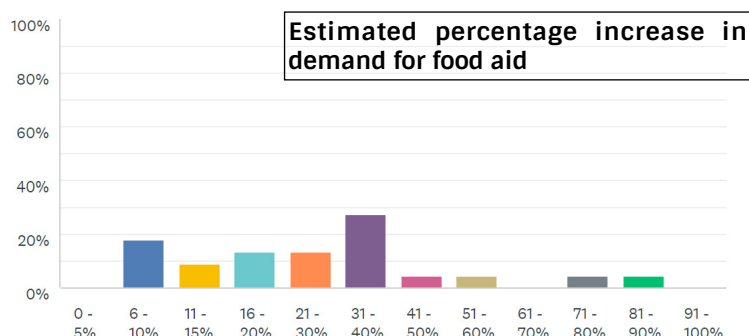


A steady increase of food demand

Over **85%** of European Food Banks continue to experience a growing food demand, resulting from an increase in the total number of people in need, especially of food due to social and economic consequences of the Covid-19.

In this latest survey, the present **average increase of food demand at European level** is around **30%**. In comparison with the situation at the beginning of July (where 15% of the respondents declared an increase of 90-100%), the situation in September is slightly improved:

- 18% of the respondents declared an increase of **6-10%**
- 27% of the respondents declared an increase of **31-40%**
- 5% of the respondents declared an increase of **81-90%**

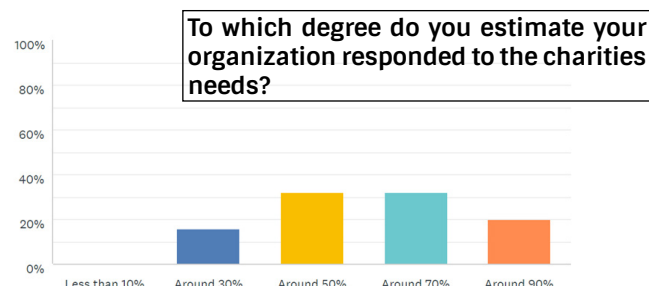


Note: FEBA members in Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, and UK did not answer the question about the increase in food demand.

A new invisible poverty

In relation to the support to charitable organisations, most of the respondents declared that they are providing a response to their needs in the measure of **around 50-70%**.

In this context, almost **85%** of the respondents declared that their affiliated charities are experiencing a **sharp increase in the number of final beneficiaries**. The social and economic consequences are emerging, and these results can be clear warning signals. There is a new kind of poverty that is not visible: almost **90%** of the respondents declared that these new poor are **people who have lost the job due to the COVID-19**, more than **60%** declared that they are **families with children who relied mainly on school meals and elderly people living alone**.





Food is an urgent need

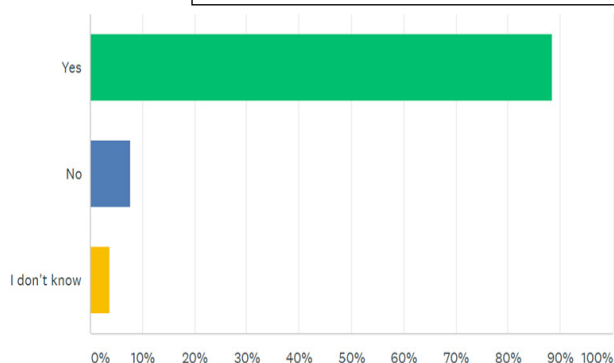
At the **beginning of September**, almost **54%** of respondents underlined that **food supply** is the **first main need** for Food Banks to face the challenge of supporting more and more charities and people in need, highlighting once again the core mission of Food Banks in Europe which consists in recovering, collecting, sorting, storing, and redistributing for free safe and nutritious food to charities.

The **results of the second report published in July** showed that almost 70% of European Food Banks in the period March-May:

- 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

Building valuable partnerships

Is your organization planning to engage in new fundraising activities?



In addition, 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 in March 2020 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.

In July 2020, to cope with the **unexpected costs and the drop in financial resources**, **more than 80%** of the respondents stressed the fact that they **engaged in successful fundraising activities**.

At the beginning of September, this trend is again confirmed because almost **90%** of European Food Banks are **planning to engage in new fundraising activities** also for the rest of the year.



Creativity and openness to change

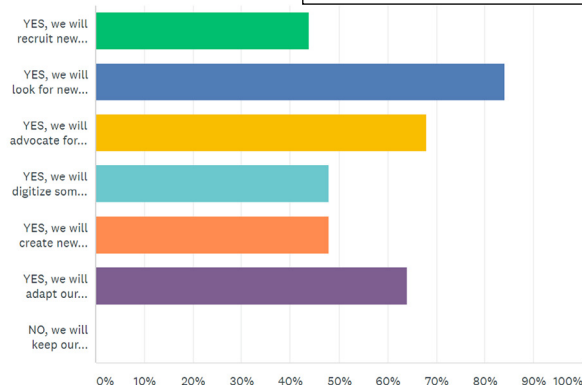
The social and economic crisis caused by Covid-19 is already evident and European Food Banks are continuously adapting to this challenging situation **planning new activities** to face this new context which is continuously evolving.

- **84%** of the respondents declared that in the following months they will look for **new collaborations** (corporations, foundations etc.)
- **68%** of the respondents declared that in the following months they will **advocate for public support**
- **64%** of the respondents declared that in the following months they will adapt the traditional Food Banks activity such as **shifts in the warehouse, homeworking, digital tools** to facilitate collaborations
- **48%** declared that they will digitalize some **traditional activities** (e.g. food collections) and create **new digital opportunities**

None of the respondents declared to have the **intention to keep the activity unchanged**. In these unprecedented times, European Food Banks are demonstrating the strength to adapt to the new challenging context redistributing more food to charities.

Since the beginning of the pandemic up to date, the support

Is your organization planning to face this new context?



of Food Banks continues to be more and more essential to ensure that no good food goes to waste and to meet the needs of charities and the most deprived. Food Banks are demonstrating to be reliable partners not only to support charities helping people in need but first of all to support the food supply chain. Food Banks are playing today a key role in preventing food waste for a social purpose, planning and adapting to face the challenges of today and tomorrow.

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

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This publication has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.