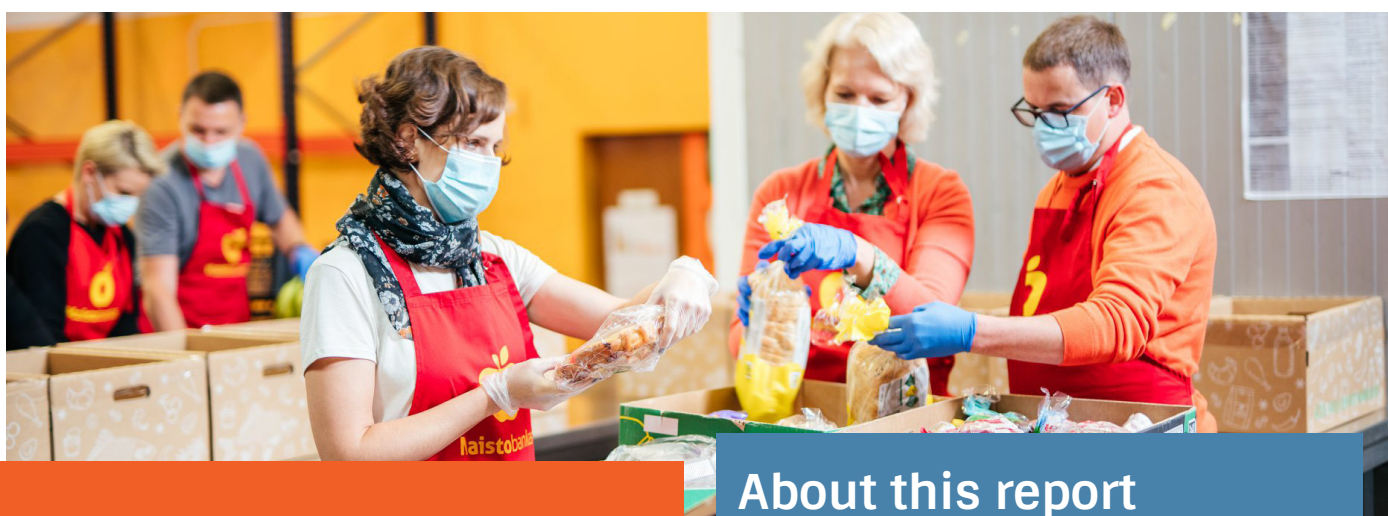


European Food Banks Federation report

COVID-19: a unique opportunity for a real change



Report published on the occasion of the UN Food Systems Summit
23 September 2021



About this report

In this report:

Since the beginning of the pandemic the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) has released 4 reports to tell the story of 335 Food Banks belonging to FEBA network across Europe, highlighting challenges, urgent needs, and tangible responses.

FEBA members have daily worked to ensure with dedication, professionalism, and spirit of adaptation a safe and fast redistribution of food, preventing tonnes of food from becoming waste while supporting charities helping people in need. Just in 2020, FEBA members recovered, collected, sorted, stored, and redistributed **860,000 tonnes of food (+12% compared to pre-COVID levels)** to support **48,126 charitable organisations helping 12.8 million people in need (+34.7% increase compared to pre-COVID levels)**.

FEBA COVID-19 reports - Overview:

- April 2020 / [Present challenges and urgent needs of European Food Banks due to COVID-19](#)
- July 2020 / [European Food Banks in a post COVID-19 Europe](#)
- September 2020 / [European Food Banks today: commitment, creativity and openness to change](#)
- December 2020 / [European Food Banks: a wave of solidarity to face COVID-19](#)

In this unprecedented period, FEBA has made its best to support its membership facing a variety of unexpected challenges. The [European Food Banks Federation Annual Report 2020](#) clearly pictures the journey made by FEBA in 2020.

Now FEBA features with a new report the situation within its network as regards the impact of COVID-19 on the daily operations of FEBA Full and Associate Members in the first half of 2021. As the situation is coming back to a 'new normal' and many restrictions have been lifted, the social and economic consequences of COVID-19 are still present.

On the occasion of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 taking place in New York on 23 September 2021, FEBA publishes this report to shed a light on the daily contribution that its members across Europe are carrying on to transform food systems and make them more sustainable, resilient, and accessible to all.

On 6-7 May 2021, FEBA organised the Annual Convention 2021 '[For a sustainable future food system](#)' recognised as a **UN Food Systems Independent Dialogue**, offering opportunities to all participants to engage in proposing pathways towards sustainable food systems, exploring new ways of working together, and encouraging collaborative actions.

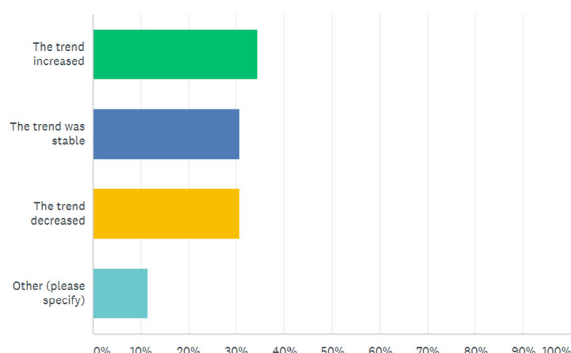
In this context, this report wants to be the contribution of FEBA and its members to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and the ongoing debate on safe, affordable, and sustainable food systems. All food businesses operators are pieces of a single picture and Food Banks are pivotal and fundamental actors of the food systems.

In this report, FEBA presents the aggregated results of the survey completed by 27 out of 29 members of the organisation¹. The results refer to the period January-June 2021. FEBA is enormously grateful to its members for providing feedback to the survey, as well as to partners and supporters for making the daily activity possible.

Food donation & food demand trends

Almost 40% of the respondents to the survey declared that the trend regarding **food donation**² increased in the period from January to July 2021, while for 26% of the respondents the trend was stable and for 34% decreased.

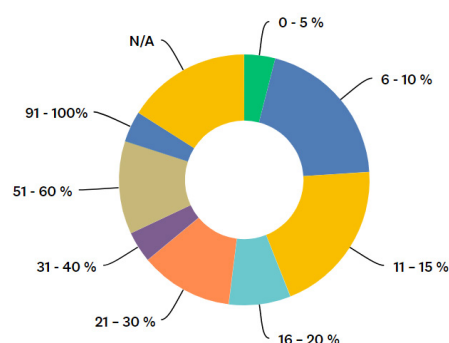
How was the trend regarding ALL food donations (recovery of surplus food + FEAD & national programmes + food collections + purchased food, etc.) in the period 1 January - 30 June 2021?



At the same time, almost **90%** of respondents declared a continued **increase in food demand**, resulting from an increase in the total number of people in need, especially of food and material assistance, due to the social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The present average increase of food demand experienced by FEBA members at European level is around **40%**. In comparison with the situation of one year ago (September 2020) that was around 30%, the average increase in food demand for FEBA members has increased highlighting the already present social and economic crisis as a consequence of the pandemic.

Did your organisation experience an increase in food demand from charities in the period January - June 2021? If YES, please indicate an estimated percentage of increase in food demand:



¹ FEBA Members in: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, and UK.

² Food donation: recovery of surplus food + FEAD & national programmes + food collections + purchased food etc.



New beneficiaries

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 **70%**. This figure highlights an efficient response by Food Banks in comparison with one year ago (60%) to support the charities network in this challenging period.

Due to the higher demand highlighted above, charities continue to experience a sharp increase in the number of end recipients. **In 2020 alone, FEBA network registered +34.7% of people in need** supported and forecasts for 2021 are not positive.

In this context, the survey wanted to assess the profile of the beneficiaries and explore whether the 'new invisible poverty' described in FEBA's previous report is still a trend.

- Almost **70%** of the respondents declared that most beneficiaries are people who have **lost their job** as a consequence of COVID-19.
- **+60%** declared that the beneficiaries are **families**
- **+40%** declared that they support a lot of **elderly people**
- **+10%** support also students – a new category of beneficiaries deeply impacted by the crisis.
- *Other categories identified:* people with disabilities or mental problems, refugees, single parents, children, homeless people.

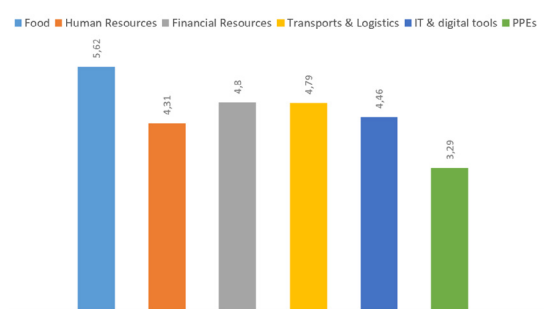
European Food Banks' response

1. Main needs

In this survey FEBA members were asked to identify the main needs for their organisations ranging from essential, moderate priority, neutral, medium priority, somewhat priority, and low priority.

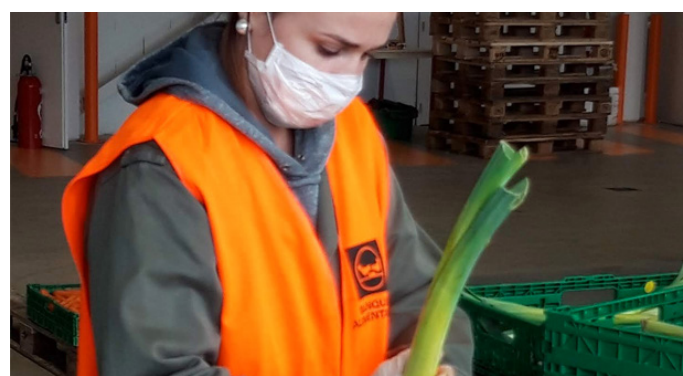
As a weighted average, the main needs of FEBA members in this period are (*from the most needed to the less needed*):

1. Food
2. Financial Resources
3. Transports & logistics
4. IT & digital tools
5. Human Resources
6. PPEs

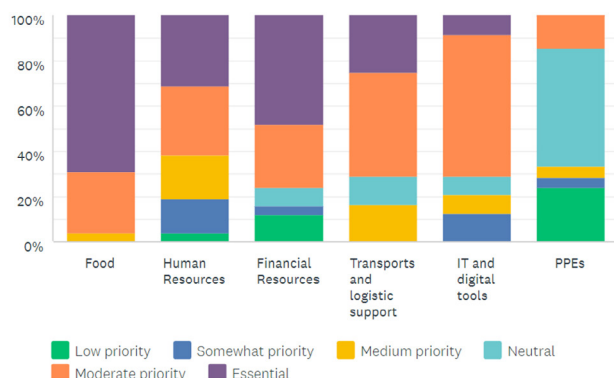


One year ago, in the survey circulated within FEBA network in **September 2020**, almost **54%** of the respondents declared that food supply was the first main need for Food Banks to face the challenge of supporting more and more charities and people in need.

One year later, the main need of European Food Banks is still **food**, 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.



Main needs for the period July - December 2021:



Food

- 70%: Essential
- 27%: Moderate priority
- 4%: Medium priority

Human resources

- 31%: Essential
- 31%: Moderate priority
- 19%: Medium priority
- 15%: Somewhat priority
- 4%: Human resources

Financial Resources

- 48%: Essential
- 28%: Moderate priority
- 8%: Neutral
- 4% Somewhat priority
- 12%: Low priority

Transports & logistic support

- 25%: Essential
- 46%: Moderate priority
- 12%: Neutral
- 17%: Medium priority

IT and digital tools

- 8%: Essential
- 62%: Moderate priority
- 8%: Neutral
- 8%: Medium priority
- 12%: Somewhat priority

PPEs

- 14%: Moderate priority
- 52%: Somewhat priority
- 5%: Medium priority
- 5%: Somewhat priority
- 24%: Low priority

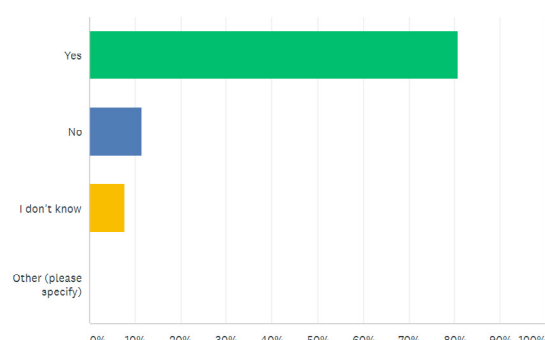
2. Building and reinforcing valuable partnerships

In the surveys circulated in 2020, soon after the outbreak of COVID-19, European Food Banks declared that they were facing unexpected costs and experiencing a drop in financial resources. The majority of FEBA members needed additional funds to continue to safely provide food and scale up operations where necessary to face the increased demand.

In **July 2020**, more than **80%** of FEBA members declared to be engaged in **fundraising activities** to cope with the unexpected costs and the drop in financial resources. In **September 2020** the **percentage increased to 90%** highlighting the **importance of building new partnerships and create networks of solidarity**.

One year later, **+80% of FEBA members are still looking for new partnerships and planning to engage in new fundraising activities** in the period from July to December 2021.

In the period from July to December 2021, are you planning to engage in any new fundraising activities?



3. Looking at the future

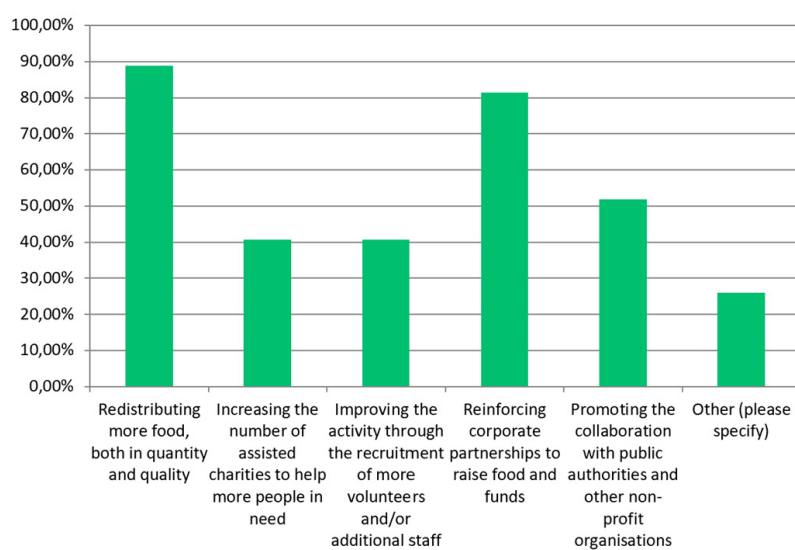
Analysing the results of this survey, and looking at the current socio-economic context, it is evident that the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 is hitting Europe hard. European Food Banks are continuously reinforcing their daily activities in this new context, setting targets and objectives.

FEBA asked its members to identify the **most important objectives** for Food Banks at national and local level for the period July - December 2021:

- **88%** of the respondents declared that they plan to redistribute more food, both in quantity and quality

- **42%** of the respondents declared that they will increase the number of assisted charities to help more people in need
- **38%** of the respondents declared that they will improve the activity through the recruitment of more volunteers and/or additional staff
- **81%** of the respondents declared that they will reinforce corporate partnerships to raise food and funds
- **50%** of the respondents declared that they will promote the collaboration with public authorities and other non-profit organisations

In the period from July to December 2021, what are the main objectives of your organisation?



Key area of actions & FEBA members' contributions:

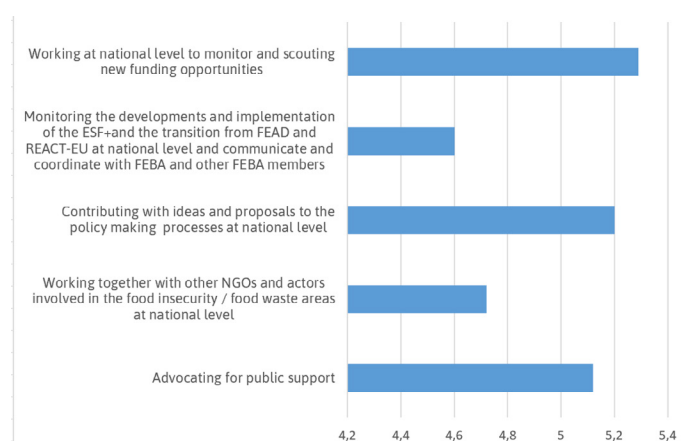
Options ranging from: Essential - Moderate priority - Neutral - Medium priority - Somewhat priority - Low priority

The survey included questions regarding the key areas of actions for FEBA members in the upcoming period.

1. Policy level

The activity of FEBA members do not only deal with food redistribution per se but has also proven to be valuable input both on policy and funding to tackle food waste and address poverty and social exclusion. In the regulatory context, we have witnessed the European Union as well as national governments creating an enabling environment to support the activity of civil society organisations, including Food Banks. In terms of fostering the recovery we will need to ensure a fair, green and digital transition. **56%** of respondents declared as essential to **work at national level to monitor and scout new funding opportunities** while they want to **contribute with ideas and proposals** (essential for **57%**). **48%** of respondents consider as essential to **advocate for public support** and **30%** are **working together with other organisations** in areas such as food insecurity and food waste prevention at national level. It is also important to mention the intention to **monitor the development and implementation of EU policies and funding**, especially in the transition from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) to the REACT-EU initiative and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

Key priorities for FEBA members at policy level



(4,2: Low priority - 5,4: Essential)

2. Communication level

In 2020 FEBA and its members developed innovative fundraising campaigns and communication strategies to reach their stakeholders. **Changing and refreshing the narrative to reposition Food Banks at national level and improving their visibility to build a broad-based support** is cited as the most important area of essential actions (for **31%** of the respondents) as well as the **importance of creating new digital opportunities**, for instance online funding campaigns (essential for **30%** of the respondents). FEBA members are also planning to **recruiting new volunteers** (essential for **23%**) and **digitalising some traditional activities or organise hybrid events** (essential for **24%**).

Key priorities for FEBA members at communication level



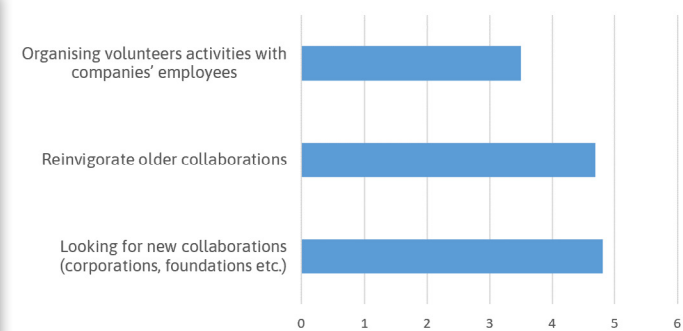
(4: low priority - 4,8: essential)

3. Corporate, Partnerships and Fundraising level

In a time of social distancing, the pandemic has had a counterbalancing effect of bringing the community closer. Understanding that an impactful recovery requires collaboration and commitment, donors - whether they are companies or individuals - are showing a renewed commitment and a greater flexibility. Partnership building is notable, as **+40%** of respondents consider as essential looking for the **establishment of new collaborations with corporations, foundations and other organisations**, and for **33%** of respondents is essential to reinvigorate existing collaborations. Moreover, **22%** of respondents consider as essential to organise **activities of corporate volunteering to engage employees**.



Key priorities for FEBA members at Corporate, Partnerships and Fundraising level



(0: low priority - 6: essential)

After more than a year of being in emergency and crisis mode, the future is still looking uncertain at present.

FEBA members are now settled into a 'new normal' and are operating at much higher levels of performance. They are handling increased quantities of food and responding to still-elevated ongoing food demand but doing it more effectively than ever before thanks to intense, shared, pandemic-pressurized learning.

This is a unique opportunity for a real change. Because of the urgency of the moment, COVID-19 as well as climate change and conflicts, are pushing change at an accelerated pace, amplifying the urgency, and developing synergic solutions leading towards a safe, affordable, sustainable food system for all.

To have more information on the European Food Banks Federation and its network:

- Visit our [new website](#)
- Visit the [webpage](#) on the UN Food Systems Independent Dialogue 'For a sustainable future food system' organised by FEBA

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