

# CHAMPIONS 12.3

## Commissioner Andriukaitis' Work to Reduce Food Loss & Waste

Commissioner Andriukaitis was born in 1951 in Kyusyur in Siberia, where his family was deported in 1941 from Soviet-occupied Lithuania. He returned to Lithuania in 1957 together with his mother and two brothers; his father followed them a year later. The childhood memories of living in the extremely harsh and impoverished environment all the way above the Arctic Circle are part of the reason why the EU chief for Health and Food Safety feels so strong about the issue of food waste:

*"As you can imagine, living conditions out there were extremely difficult. When I was a little boy, I could not even understand the concept of food waste. There was just no food to throw away, as we had very little food to eat in the first place! These memories have stayed with me for all my life; therefore, I can only perceive food waste as an ethical, economic and more and more environmental absurdity."* – **Vytenis Andriukaitis**

Andriukaitis studied medicine and had a long career as a cardiothoracic surgeon, before turning to politics full-time. He served for six terms as an MP in the Lithuania's Parliament, and worked as the Minister of Health in 2012-2014.

In the context of various initiatives related to public health and food safety, prevention of food losses and food waste is one of the priorities under his portfolio as the European Commissioner:

*"I welcome the opportunity to help build this innovative global partnership to fight food waste. The EU is committed to meeting the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 by reducing food waste by 50 percent by 2030 – I look forward to sharing our experience and taking away valuable learning from other Coalition partners. As the European Commissioner in charge of food waste, I will make sure that the European Commission gives its concrete contribution to this crucial endeavor through the specific actions plan which we have already identified."* – **Vytenis Andriukaitis**

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## EU Action to Prevent Food Losses and Waste

Since 2012, the European Commission has been working closely with Member States and stakeholders to support the development of effective food waste prevention strategies that do not jeopardize food and feed safety. A dedicated Commission [website](#) on food waste prevention outlines EU actions against food waste and encourages mobilization at local, national and regional levels, making available materials to support awareness raising in Member States and promoting dissemination of good practices in food waste prevention.

Food waste is singled out as a priority area in the [Circular Economy Package](#), adopted by the Commission in 2015, which reaffirms the EU's commitment to reach the global Sustainable Development Goal to halve food waste by 2030.

Measurement is a prerequisite for action: we need to understand where we lose food resources, how much and why in order to build effective food waste prevention programs. EU data on food waste levels are insufficient and the Commission's proposal for the revision of [waste legislation](#) attempts to address this knowledge gap. The proposal strengthens measures on food waste prevention calling on Member States to reduce food waste at each stage of the food supply chain, monitor food waste levels and report back on progress made. In order to support these efforts, the Commission will elaborate a harmonized measurement methodology to allow consistent quantification of food waste at each stage of the food supply chain drawing on the valuable tools made available at global and EU levels ([WRI Food Loss and Waste Protocol](#), [FUSIONS](#)). This will allow all players to share their experience in food waste prevention and best practice, informed by a sound evidence base.

Food waste prevention calls for concrete action on the ground by all players, co-operation and joined up efforts throughout the food value chain. By setting up the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#) – bringing together all key actors representing both public and private interests – we will help catalyze this process at EU level. At the first meeting of the Platform held in November 2016, members welcomed the establishment of this forum as a means of helping all actors to design ways of eliminating food waste from our food systems. Focused on action, stakeholders are eager to share experience and business cases in order to seize opportunities, replicate successful models and consider scaling up those initiatives which can make a significant contribution to food waste prevention in the EU.

As part of the Circular Economy Action Plan the Commission is currently preparing EU guidelines to facilitate food donation as well as the valorization of former foodstuffs as a resource for animal feed. The Commission is also examining ways to improve the use of [date marking](#) in the food chain and its understanding by consumers. In 2016, we launched new research to map date marking practices by food business authorities and control authorities. Together with consumer research and other findings, this study will help inform future policies on date marking.

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*“By the end of my mandate, I would like to see the EU leading global efforts in fighting food waste – with active national food waste prevention programs in place in all countries and involving all key stakeholders. To this end, I have urged all members of the EU Platform to: ‘Be a hero – rescue food, rescue people, rescue the planet!’*

*I welcome the establishment of the Champions 12.3 Coalition and am confident that the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of its members will ensure that, through our collective efforts, we quickly move forward to reach the global food waste reduction target.” – **Vytenis Andriukaitis***