



*CHRONICLE OF THREE  
YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF  
THE SOCIALIST DEPUTIES*

FOR A NEW STAGE IN THE FIGHT  
AGAINST WASTE  
FOOD

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# CHRONICLE OF THREE YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF THE SOCIALIST DEPUTIES: FOR A NEW STAGE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOD WASTE BY GUILLAUME GAROT, 19 . 10 . 2020

According to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation), food waste in the world amounts to 1.3 billion tons of lost consumables per year - even though 800 million people are undernourished on the planet.

This is the equivalent of 3.3 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> released into the atmosphere, a little less than 10% of our total carbon footprint: a waste of natural resources as much as a degradation of the climate.

That's \$750 billion lost per year.

It's nonsense: made to throw away, nothing more absurd.

We are therefore facing a major social, economic and environmental scourge. It is essential to understand that we are not talking about a few full plates thrown in the trash: the quantities are considerable, the impact is real, the stakes are global.

In France, the ADEME estimates the food waste at 29kg per year and per inhabitant, of which 7kg is still packed, a loss of more than 100€ per person. According to the same source, it represents 3% of France's carbon emissions. 3% avoidable, therefore.

We are among the most advanced countries in the fight against food waste. The National Pact against Food Waste, created in 2013 and renewed every 4 years, is a strategic tool for our national policy.

The law on the fight against food waste of February 11, 2016, known as the "Garot law", prohibits the destruction of unsold food that is still consumable, regulates donations to food aid associations, prioritizes actions to fight against waste, and includes this fight in the food education provided in schools and after-school programs. The EGAlim law, in 2018, and the AGECE law, in 2020, have continued along this path, strengthening the existing mechanisms.

We are currently awaiting the decrees implementing the AGECE law on the quality of food donations and the creation of an "anti-gaspi" label. These measures will be, with the extension of the obligation to donate unsold products to major food and catering operators, an important issue in the coming months.

What conclusions can we draw today from our action?

We must be delighted by the awareness of our society, the numerous public and private initiatives that are multiplying everywhere in our territories, the interest in the subjects of waste and the circular economy in the media and among our fellow citizens, especially in the current context of questioning our food model.

But much remains to be done: donations to associations have increased in quantity, but their quality is a problem; the consumption link continues to account for nearly one-third of food waste; consumer information often remains partial and unsuitable.

The AGECE law has set clear and quantified objectives: a 50% reduction in food waste between 2015 and 2025 in food distribution and collective catering, and a 50% reduction between 2015 and 2030 in consumption, production, processing and commercial catering.

To meet these objectives, we must take strong action today. The time has come to take another step against food waste.

The Pact, the Roadmap for the Circular Economy, and agreements between private actors are necessary tools. But it is essential that they be supported by a clear legislative framework. This is the first reason for this bill, which is a milestone in the fight against food waste along three axes :

- Food education recognizes the central place of the consumer in the fight against food waste.

- The strengthening of control and information in the fight against food wastage

- Strong financial and material support to public and private initiatives to fight against food waste, through the creation of a dedicated National Fund.

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**Proposal 1 - Make the fight against food waste a "Great National Cause" for the year 2021.**

As shown above, the problem of food waste is social, environmental and economic at the same time. The stakes involved, which amount to billions of euros and tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, deserve a national campaign in their own right.

The "Great National Cause" label can be the major tool of this campaign. Awarded to several associations fighting against waste, it would allow them to broadcast free TV and radio commercials during prime time.

**Proposal 2 - Make food education compulsory during school time from primary to high school.** Currently, the education code imposes food education during school time or during extracurricular activities.

It is necessary to remove this mention of extracurricular time, in order to set up a real cycle of education in nutrition from primary school to high school. This measure will obviously have to be accompanied by the necessary human and financial resources for schools.

Of course, it is up to the Ministry of Education and the Conseil supérieur des programmes to define and implement the content of this education, at the crossroads of health, environment, economy, culture and heritage issues.

**Proposal 3 - Introduce an "empty plate bonus" in university restaurants.** Collective catering and final consumption are two of the main "sources" of food waste in France. As an extension of the food education provided up to the high school level proposed above, the creation of an incentive scheme in university restaurants makes it possible to continue raising consumer awareness.

The principle of the empty-plate bonus is simple: users who return their empty tray after the meal benefit from a "bonus" that can take various forms: on a monthly or weekly basis, unbilled or cheaper meals, free coffee, etc.

If university catering seems to be the appropriate place to experiment this measure, incentive schemes for consumers in the catering industry - including commercial catering - are one of the major axes of a national policy to fight against food waste in the coming years.

**Proposal 4 - Valorize the donation of farm losses and gleaning,** by enshrining in law the possibility for farmers to enter into a donation agreement, or "gleaning agreement", on a model similar to those set up between food donation associations and medium and large supermarkets.

**Proposal 5 - Make quality control of the donation truly effective.** The Garot law enforcement reports all note the ineffectiveness of these controls, if not their absence, despite the provisions and sanctions provided for in the law! This problem is due in particular to the vagueness as to which services are competent to carry out these operations. We therefore propose to clearly establish in the law the principle of quality control of donations, on the one hand, and the application of this principle on the other hand.

available by services with policing powers, jointly managed by the Ministries of Food and Economy.

**Proposal 6 - Generalize the obligation to provide figures on food waste.** It is indeed essential to measure this food waste in order to verify progress and achieve the reduction objectives.

It is therefore necessary to rely on clear and precise data. The methods, detailed by the ADEME Group 1 report issued in 2019, exist. The same report calls for a "national monitoring" of food losses and a commitment from each of the actors. This provision is part of the extension of the Garot and EGAlim laws, which require a diagnosis of food waste to major food and catering companies.

The law can accompany this commitment, by defining the obligations of costing and specific measures for each of the operators involved in the fight against food waste: large and medium-sized supermarkets, food processing industries, restaurants, etc. These documents, their content, the data collected and the means of measurement must of course differ according to the nature and situation of the company.

**Proposal 7 - Create a National Fund to fight food waste.** In order for the provisions outlined above to be implemented in a rapid and cross-cutting manner, the creation of this structure is essential. Indeed, financial and material support must be complementary to the legislative framework to encourage good public and private initiatives everywhere in the territories: isothermal trucks to transport food donations, guides to good practices produced by local authorities, etc.