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Code of Conduct for Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices

FoodServiceEurope 2024 Annual Report

Name: FoodServiceEurope

Contact Person: Francisco Herrera

Contact details: fherrera@foodserviceeurope.org

Transparency number: 822198744-40

Step in the food chain represented: Contract catering

Members:

- 10 National Association Members: UBC, SNRC, VIMOSZ, ANGEM, AHRESP, Food Service Spain, VISITA, GV AUSTRIA, FEDIL Catering, NHOSH
- 4 Associate Members (e.g., companies): Compass, Elior, Sodexo, Trivalor

About FoodServiceEurope

FoodServiceEurope represents the European contract catering sector. Contract catering encompasses food and ancillary services provided to people working or living in communities – private and public undertakings, schools, universities, hospitals, retirement homes, prisons – under the terms of a contract with the client communities.

With an annual turnover of around €25 billion, the sector's 600,000-strong workforce delivers approximately 6 billion meals each year to workers, civil servants, pupils, students, hospital patients and care home residents in the EU.

Contract catering is a unique part of the food system and differs significantly from other forms of food service. Contract catering services are provided on the premises of the contracting party, which awards contracts through procurement tenders.

Contract catering plays a crucial social function. Its meals are regularly delivered to vulnerable consumers (e.g., children, patients), at a subsidised "social" price. Contract catering thereby guarantees access to nutrition to individuals that may not otherwise have it.

Endorsement of the aspirational objectives set out in the Code

FoodServiceEurope is committed to contributing to improving the sector's performance and providing clients and consumers with healthy and increasingly sustainable meals. We strongly endorse the aspirational objectives and targets listed in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices and are committed to support in the shift towards more sustainable food systems in the EU.

FoodServiceEurope was a member of the task force of middle-of-the-supply-chain associations that was mandated with developing the Code of Conduct in 2021 with the European Commission.

Following this process, FoodServiceEurope was among the first signatories of the Code in June 2021, highlighting our members support for the Code and its aspirational objectives.

FoodServiceEurope associate member Sodexo also [signed](#) the Code as a company signatory in June 2021 and put forward concrete commitments.

Promotion and dissemination of the Code with our members

Since members unanimously voted for FoodServiceEurope to sign the Code of Conduct in June 2021 General Assembly, we have been continuing efforts to promote and disseminate it with our members. These efforts have involved a variety of activities which are outlined below.

A dedicated taskforce

The Farm to Fork taskforce that was established in 2022 has continued to meet regularly. It addresses the priorities for FoodServiceEurope regarding the Farm to Fork strategy and the work related to the Code of Conduct. Members have been exchanging information and best practices on how they are working towards the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code, which are useful to improve the reporting obligation of the Code.

A dedicated webpage

We have kept updated the dedicated space on our [website](#) that was created to promote the Code towards members, prospective members and the broader contract catering community. Our annual reports can be found there.

Regular updates

Members are regularly informed about updates on the Code of Conduct through our monthly newsletter, as well as through direct contact via email when appropriate.

Social media

We have been actively promoting our activities relating to the Code of Conduct, as well as disseminating the information shared by the Commission through our social media pages on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#). For example, we published our past annual reports and shared the Commission's first and second mapping of the commitments submitted under the Code.

Encouraging members to align sustainability actions and business practices with the Code

The Code of Conduct was included again to our 2024 Work Programme, reaffirming it as a priority for FoodServiceEurope. It had first been introduced to the 2022 Work Programme at the November 2021 General Assembly.

Through the promotional activities that have been outlined above, members are regularly being encouraged to align their sustainability actions and business practices with the Code.

Developing resources in support of the Code

Code of Conduct survey

In order to understand our members' ongoing sustainability actions or business practices that are aligned with the aspirational objectives of the Code, we have conducted a survey with our members. This exercise was first carried out in 2022, and members found it a useful tool to share best practices and provide inspiration to establish similar initiatives.

Therefore, we repeated the survey this year and the information provided below outlines the new initiatives that our members have introduced in the last year. For more information on other ongoing sustainability initiatives by our members, please see our [2022](#) and [2023](#) reports.

This year's survey has shown an increase in members activities supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work. Compass and Sodexo have launched new and ambitious initiatives in this regard. Additionally, as in 2022 and 2023, the majority of activities by members addressed healthy, balanced and sustainable diets, closely followed by actions to achieve a circular and resource-efficient food chain.

Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets

The majority of members have sustainability actions in place that align to aspirational objective 1 in the Code of Conduct: healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers, contributing to reversing malnutrition and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the EU and reducing the environmental footprint of food consumption by 2030.

Last year we reported on AHRESP's programme '[Selecao Gastronomia e Vinhos](#)', which has sustainability criteria to be met in the verification checklist. To date, 250 establishments have adhered to this programme. Further to that, AHRESP members are reducing the quantity of sugar and salt per meal served. Some of their members are part of the '100% Food Ebook' project to reduce salt consumption through recipes without added salt in collaboration with the Portuguese Association of Nutritionists and a celebrity chef. The recipes also minimise food waste while increasing the nutritional value of the final meal. Other projects which AHPRESP members are members of include:

- 'Food without whys Guide', which currently has 5 editions published (1 per year). The guide aims to connect with the school community in a fun and educational way about food and nutrition literacy in line with sustainability and social responsibility. This is an ongoing project with a multifaceted and wide-ranging approach to food and has been increasingly well received by customers and consumers in Portugal.
- 'MedON project', which will enable consumers to make healthier and more conscious choices in line with the Mediterranean Diet. Thus, reducing the amount of animal protein in meals and reducing the environmental footprint of the food Portuguese companies offer in their canteens.
- 'Casca IN project', an ongoing initiative which aims to reduce food waste in AHRESP members' area of operation and to increase the nutritional value of their clients/consumers meals. It will also contribute to the reduction in water and energy costs.
- 'FlexITAUrianismo', to promote a healthier lifestyle and reduce animal protein consumption.

Additionally, AHRESP, in partnership with the Portuguese Nutrition Association, is making their company members aware of the goals of the Portuguese [Integrated Strategy for the Promotion of Healthy Eating](#), which includes targets for the reduction of salt in restaurant meals and sugar in desserts. To that end, they have contributed to the development of the Guide to Good Nutritional Practices, which is pending validation by the Ministry of Health. In parallel, AHRESP participates in the [National Council for Food and Nutrition Security](#) and promotes practical training in [vegan cooking](#) for its members.

In Hungary, all of VIMOSZ members continue to have in place programmes for healthier food choices and the reduction of the environmental footprint despite the challenging 45% food inflation and increased energy prices in the country. For instance, one of their members is going to implement vegetarian gourmet products and vegan meat alternatives this year. The goal is to reduce the level of meat consumption and its environmental footprint by 2030.

Furthermore, VIMOSZ continues to participate in the [PLAN'EAT](#) project. VIMOSZ is responsible for bringing together the most innovative actors in the catering industry through the food services Consultation and Working Group (CWG). Best practices at EU level to improve the environmental and health impact of catering are promoted. Project members also come together to ask policymakers to address regulatory barriers. The project will carry out an in-depth analysis of dietary habits and provisions in 9 regions, involving 600 food system operators and 1800 citizens in 9 Living Labs. A "True Cost Accounting" database and methodology will be developed and applied. A set of solutions will be developed with food chain actors, consumers and policy makers and 3 best practices will be selected through co-creation and finally tested in the Living Laboratories (February-June 2024). The results will be applied also in Hungary. VIMOSZ keeps FoodServiceEurope members regularly updated on the developments of this project.

Among associate members, Sodexo (at [group level](#)) has developed a "low-carbon" meal definition as one whose production generates 0.9 kg CO₂e or less. Based on this definition and on the expertise of its chefs, Sodexo is designing new recipes to ensure that 70% of its main dishes can be labelled "low carbon" by 2030. In the fiscal year 2023, there were 22.9% plant-based main dish recipes in Sodexo's menus and 6,187 dietitians were employed.

We have highlighted some of the new initiatives of our members during the last year. For more information on their ongoing activities see our [2022](#) and [2023](#) reports.

Food loss and food waste

Regarding food loss and food waste, all members who responded to the survey in 2024 continue to have activities which align with the aspiration objective to prevent and reduce food loss and waste and will contribute to the aspirational target of a 50% reduction of per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030 and reduced food losses along the food production and supply chains in the EU. Some associate members have similar targets in place, such as Sodexo and Compass that both have committed to reducing food loss and food waste by 50% by 2030.

Among national associations, VIMOSZ continues to implement the '[Wasteless](#)' initiative which they are members of, and which we reported on in our 2022 and 2023 reports. As a result, they have run awareness-raising campaigns for adults and food waste prevention programmes in primary schools. Additionally, one of its members is measuring and analysing monthly food waste in canteens to improve food waste reduction. Another one of its members is implementing the 'Szupermenza' programme, which is improving the food environment for children by serving healthy food and making dining areas more cheerful. This is a buffet style serving model that encourages children to take only

as much as they can actually eat, thereby reducing food waste. Based on the Swedish catering model, it was tailored for Hungarian children. This new model resulted in halving the generated food waste.

Furthermore, Eurest Luxembourg (a member of FEDIL Catering) offers an 'anti-waste' service in their restaurants where customers can buy meals at a preferential price after 5pm. This is part of their "Sharing is caring" programme. All profits are donated to an association promoting the social and professional integration of disadvantaged people. They have also introduced a new tool, called '[Winnow](#)', to track food waste in their operations and improve their waste reduction plan.

In Portugal, some AHRESP members are part of the 'Tripartite Plate Project', with the collaboration of the Dr Ricardo Jorge Institute. This project establishes the appropriate portion sizes of meals, in accordance with what is recommended in a healthy and sustainable diet.

In Norway, NHOSH represented the food service, hotel and tourism sectors in the Food Loss and Food Waste Committee, established by the Minister of Climate and Environment and the Minister of Agriculture and Food in February 2023. The committee submitted in December 2023 [recommendations](#) for achieving Norway's goal of halving food waste by 2030. The recommendations estimate that there is an overall potential of a 75% food waste reduction from the current level. To achieve this reduction, main measures proposed include the introduction of due diligence requirements and the strengthening of the industry agreement that affects both private and public enterprises. A food donation obligation and price reductions in grocery stores are suggested as well.

Regarding associate members, Sodexo is expanding the deployment of its [WasteWatch](#) programme (which we reported on in our previous reports) to 85% of its sites by 2025. During the fiscal year 2023 57% of food waste reduction on sites have already deployed the WasteWatch programme (from 41.5% in 2022). Sodexo also maintains its involvement as a member of the [Champions 12.3 coalition](#). Compass and Elixor continue to implement their measurement technologies in their kitchens outlined in our [2022 report](#). Compass also continues to raise awareness with their annual [Stop Food Waste Day](#) campaign, which is tailored to each of their national markets.

Furthermore, Sodexo, Elixor and Compass continue to actively engage with the International Food Waste Coalition (IFWC), which they are members of. The IFWC recently published an updated food waste [methodology](#) tailored to the contract catering sector.

Climate neutral food chain

All our associate members continue to have sustainability initiatives in place that are contributing to the third aspirational objective of the Code: a climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050. Under this objective, the aspirational target is a reduction in net emission from own operators, contributing to a 55% GHG emission reduction target in the EU food chain by 2030, which mirrors many associate member's own targets.

Sodexo has [committed](#) to reaching Net Zero by 2040 globally (scopes 1, 2 and 3). In fiscal year 2023 they achieved a 5.4% reduction in carbon emissions (vs. 2022, absolute scopes 1,2 and 3); a 32.9% reduction in absolute Scope 1 & 2 emissions (market-based, compared to 2017 baseline); and a 20.6% reduction in absolute Scope 3 emissions (compared to 2017 baseline).

To meet its climate neutral food chain [goal](#) by 2050, Compass is driving reductions in food waste produced by both chefs and suppliers; encouraging suppliers to reduce emissions and demonstrate progress against their climate reduction targets; working with chefs to reformulate menus to feature more plant-based proteins; and steering behavioural changes, through product placement to

encourage consumers to choose sustainably-sourced, plant-forward dishes. They have reduced by 12% their emissions in 2022 (compared to the 2019 baseline).

Regarding national members, some of AHRESP members are in the process of calculating their emissions scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3, to establish targets to reducing emissions. They have already incorporated electric and plug-in vehicles in their fleet, installed solar panels in their sites and bought green energy. They also continue to implement the 'TriFootFood' [project](#), to calculate the carbon footprint of their meals, and that we reported on in our 2022 [report](#). In Hungary, VIMOSZ members are working to maintain the shortest possible supply chain, in compliance with the latest national regulations in place for a mandatory short supply chain. There cannot be a fourth (or more) party between the producer, the supplier and the contract catering kitchen.

As reported in our 2023 [report](#), VISITA (Sweden) continues to work on sustainable alternatives in transport and encourages their member companies to take further action to reduce food waste throughout the whole value chain. NHOSH (Norway) is implementing their [guide](#) for foodservice companies to set up and run a sustainability strategy aligned with the UN SDG goals and CR Services' (Luxembourg) menus continue to meet the standards of the '[Sou schmaacht Lëtzebuerg SSL](#)' label that requires two menus a week to be composed of national products.

Circular and resource-efficient food chain

Regarding the aspirational target to improve resource-efficiency within own operations, contributing to sustainable, efficient use and management of energy and natural resources in operations by 2030, some members have initiatives in place regarding optimising by-products and improving the energy efficiency of their sites. For instance, some AHRESP members have set partnerships with actors in the biologic agriculture to supply them with coffee grounds. Other end-of-life products are recycled or valorised (such as cooking oil). They have also installed photovoltaic panels and flow water reducers in their sites. Additionally, AHRESP continues its involvement in the [project](#) with the Portuguese Energy Services Regulatory Entity (ERSE) to improve energy performance in the contract catering sector, as reported last year.

Eurest Luxembourg (a member of FEDIL Catering) continues to monitor their electricity and gas consumption on its sites and is implementing an energy efficiency plan. They have also published an energy saving guide and use renewable energy on all its controlled sites.

Our associated member Sodexo is on track to achieving its [target](#) of 100% renewable electricity in its direct operations by 2025. In fiscal year 2023 the share of Sodexo's renewable electricity consumption was 55%, well above the 40% target for the year.

Since our last report in 2023, members continue to be active on plastics reduction. Some AHRESP members have implemented measures to reduce the consumption of disposable materials and about 52% of their food packaging is recyclable. They are further working to reduce the use of plastic in preparations and in the use of returnable containers. AHRESP also participates in the '[Re source](#)' global open innovation program, focused on the circular economy and digital disruption of the packaging and packaging waste industry. AHRESP supports as well the '[A Tip For Nature](#)' project, which aims to increase the recycling rate of packaging glass in the HORECA sector. This project is promoted by AIVE (Association of Packaging Glass Manufacturers) and FEVE (European Federation of Glass Containers).

Eurest Luxembourg uses reusable long-life plastic pallets instead of single use plastic packaging. For fruit and vegetables, its suppliers use recyclable and/or compostable materials such as paper bags,

cotton nets and cardboard trays. They are reducing single use packaging at their table service and shared a Single-use Guidelines with their clients.

To find out more about ongoing actions of other FoodServiceEurope members please see our [2022](#) and [2023](#) reports.

Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Since our last report in 2023, there has been again an increase in members' initiatives aimed at supporting a skilled workforce and providing safe and inclusive workplaces for all. For example, AHRESP members have a health and safety training program for their workers through which they promote healthy and safe workplaces. They work on the improvement of employees' literary qualifications through the recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) process. AHRESP members also foster inclusive workplaces by integrating people with disabilities.

In Sweden, VISITA has in place a joint research and development fund (BFUF) in partnership with the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union (HRF). This fund contributes to research and development projects to support the industry. It addresses sustainable change, skills development and any actions that the industry can take to make the contract catering a more attractive place to work in.

Eurest Luxembourg (a member of FEDIL Catering) has developed a [Diversity Charter](#) awarded by Inspiring More Sustainability, a well-known association in Luxembourg. It showcases their commitment to supporting the dignity, wellbeing and human rights of all their employees, the communities in which they operate, and those affected by their operations. They have also drafted a Code of Business Conduct (CDC) that has been signed by their suppliers to ensure an ethic, responsible and sustainable partnership.

Regarding our associate members, Compass launched the [Compass Group Foundation](#) in January 2023. It funds charity partners in the countries where Compass Group operates, enabling people from disadvantaged groups to access job opportunities within the food and hospitality sector and supporting SMEs in the food supply chain. Compass Group businesses amplify this impact through volunteering, co-funding and by leveraging other donations. In 2023, the Foundation awarded funding to 14 initiatives across eight countries: UK, USA, India, Türkiye, Spain, Sweden, Australia and France.

In 2023, Sodexo launched '[Vita by Sodexo](#)', a global employee benefits programme offering all its employees a common minimum base of social benefits. The programme, which is currently being deployed, aims to offer all employees with at least one year's length of service, paid parental leave, a life insurance offer, an assistance program and free psychological support, as well as paid carer's leave. By the end of 2024, the program will be deployed in at least 60% of the countries where Sodexo operates. In addition, Sodexo's [SheWorks](#) program aims to help vulnerable women return to work by allowing them to discover the professional opportunities offered by the Group.

Sodexo also takes global action against gender-based violence. They signed a [joint declaration to combat domestic violence](#) with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations (IUFA). As a result, Sodexo developed the 'Time to Act' global guidelines on addressing gender-based violence. These guidelines provide information and training to Sodexo teams and support each country in implementing relevant measures in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs, and clients. Additionally, in fiscal year 2023 45% of women working at Sodexo were in management positions. There were 9,646 disabled employees and 70.5% of Sodexo's employees worked in countries that have gender balance in their management populations.

Members also continue their support training and upskilling activities included in our [2023 report](#).

Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership

Members initiatives continue to be aligned with the aspirational objective to progress towards sustainable production, to contribute to sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources by 2030 and to improve animal welfare.

Further to our 2023 report, where we presented several actions by our members establishing additional partnerships in the food supply chain, some members are making progress on animal welfare. For instance, in Hungary some VIMOSZ members are on track of meeting their goal to use only cage-free eggs by 2025. As well as meeting their goal to only source chicken that comes from suppliers respecting animal welfare by 2030. Compass group, Sodexo and Elixor continue their engagement as members of the Global Coalition for Animal Welfare ([GCAW](#)). Sodexo continues to work with the Global Action in the Interest of Animals ([GAIA](#)), asking each of their suppliers to sign the Animal Welfare Charter.

Regarding the objective to support improved resilience and competitiveness of the supply chain, Sodexo's global [Supply Chain Inclusion Program](#) proactively seeks to increase the number of and support SME vendors and those owned or operated by women or minorities in their supply base. They run mentoring programs to support their suppliers' growth at the local level, such as the UK Supply Chain Inclusion Programme or Impact+ in France. In fiscal year 2023 91.1% of countries where Sodexo operates had specific initiatives to integrate SMEs into Sodexo's Value Chain.

Sustainable sourcing in supply chains

Many members are focusing on short supply chains that privilege local sourcing to combat deforestation and the negative externalities of international trade. For example, Some VIMOSZ members have already phased out palm oil in their restaurants to protect rainforests. In Portugal, AHRESP members have signed the Code for Suppliers to privilege national suppliers. Currently, 83% of their suppliers are Portuguese and foreign suppliers are located in EU countries to avoid long supply chains: Spain (9.5%), Italy (1.7%), France (0.9%), the Netherlands (0.8%) and Belgium (0.7%). They have also joined BCSD Portugal's [Act4nature](#) initiative, where they commit to protect and restore biodiversity by promoting consumption of fish from sustainable stocks, for example.

In the case of Eurest Luxembourg (a member of FEDIL Catering), 90% of their suppliers are based in Luxembourg. They have asked their suppliers to sign the company's code of ethics and good conduct to ensure social performance in food supply chains. Eurest Luxembourg also prioritises local and sustainable products whenever possible. For instance, 50% of their sea food comes from certified sustainable sources and bananas are 100% fairtrade certified. They use 100% cage-free eggs and 100% Luxembourgish potatoes and beef.

Further to Sodexo's [commitment](#) to a deforestation and conversion-free supply chain globally by 2030 for palm oil, soy, beef, bananas and paper products. In the fiscal year 2023, Sodexo achieved: 100% of certified sustainable palm oil; 81.3% of spend on sustainable fish and seafood; 85.1% of spend on certified sustainable hygiene paper; 92% of spend on sustainable office paper; 71.5% of cage free liquid eggs. For 87% of Sodexo revenues, they are on track to achieving 100% shell and liquid cage-free eggs by 2025 despite supply shortages and lack of production capacities.

Strong alignment already exists but there are opportunities for further action

Overall, the results of the survey conducted in 2024 indicated that already there is a large amount of alignment between our members' sustainability actions and business practices and the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code of Conduct. While our associate members have actions in place that meet all of the seven objectives of the Code, the survey highlights that there are still opportunities for our national association members to undertake initiatives that would align to objective 3, regarding achieving a climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050 and objective 6, regarding creating sustainable value in the food supply chain through partnership. We will continue to work with our members towards the aspirational objectives of the Code.

Engaging with other partners in the food chain

As signatories of the Code, we attended the Collaborative platform meeting that took place in December 2023 bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, including both signatories and other interested parties (e.g., NGO & civil society).

FoodServiceEurope is an active member of the EU Platform on Food Waste and Food Loss and two of its subgroups (Food donation sub-group and Food loss and waste monitoring sub-group), where we have the opportunity to engage with other actors in the food chain and EU and international policy makers to exchange good practices, discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other and create better mutual understanding on the topic of food loss and food waste.

In 2023, we attended the joint meeting of the EU Platform with the Advisory Group on Sustainability of Food Systems (March), and the joint meeting with the European Citizens' Panel (November). We also attended the meeting of the food donation sub-group in November, as well as the meetings of the food loss and waste monitoring sub-group in May and October.

FoodServiceEurope is also a member of the Advisory Group on Sustainability of Food Systems (AGSFS), which replaced the Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health and which we were also members of. This forum allows us to exchange with other food chain stakeholders and EU officials on policy topics related to food and sustainability.

We attended the AGSFS plenary meeting in May 2023, where there was an agenda point on international outreach on Sustainable Food Systems, and the plenary meeting in November 2023, where the EU action plan on food waste reduction was discussed. We also attended the ad hoc meeting on the Legislative Framework for Sustainable Food Systems in July 2023 and the ad hoc meeting on the preparatory work for the monitoring of the Farm to Fork Strategy in September 2023.

Beyond these fora, we also attend relevant meetings that align with the aspirational goals of the Code, such as the 'Food Waste and Food Donation – Charting Progress and Future Directions' seminar organized by the Food Law and Policy Clinic of the Harvard Law School and hosted by DG AGRI in April 2024. At this seminar, a global atlas of food donation policies was presented.

FoodServiceEurope will continue our active engagement in these platforms.