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**Food waste: consumers are ready for change:
Ambitious engagement from both consumers and businesses is needed**

Brussels - Inspired by *Approved by Tomorrow*, Euroconsumers' today announced the results of a survey on food waste conducted among 6,953 consumers in Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The survey found that a majority of the respondents are bothered by food waste and are taking steps to reduce it in their households. However, consumers also believe the food industry bears a huge responsibility and ask them for more engagement and concrete tools to tackle food waste. Change is possible - but consumers, the food industry and policy makers need to work together to make it happen.

Specific highlights include:

- **Food waste is an issue:** While a large majority of consumers strongly agrees that throwing away edible food is just not right and food waste has a negative impact on the environment, 77% of respondents stated they are also making an effort to reduce it in their households.
- **Pre-COVID:** 67% of respondents throw away at least a little food, led by families with children and those that make impulsive food purchases.
- **During confinement:** 37% increase of people not wasting food amongst respondents, resulting from better planning of meals and grocery shopping, overall increase in cooking at home and more frequent reuse of leftovers from previous meals.
- **Food industry:** 74% of respondents assigned a significant responsibility for food waste to the food industry as well.
- **In restaurants:** Respondents were mixed on whether or not to bring food home when eating out; 26% of the respondents never ask to take leftover food home (doggy-bags) with reasons ranging from not enough food left, to embarrassment and inconvenience.
- **Need for labelling:** results show that 67% of respondents do not properly understand the information provided by the dates displayed on food products (either “use-by” or “best-before”); 62% strongly agree that labels should be modified to indicate if the food is still edible; a large majority of respondents (75%) said supermarkets should have specific sections for products on sale when approaching their “use-by” date.
- **Need for support by digital tools:** 55% of the respondents are very willing to use news tools such as digital apps and websites to be connected with grocery stores and purchase daily food surpluses at a reduced price.

Conclusion

The survey results made clear that consumers understand the negative impacts of food waste and want to change their habits, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they also believe the food industry bears a shared responsibility for encouraging food waste and should implement practical solutions (e.g. labeling, bulk food, smaller packaging, smaller portions in restaurants) to help reduce it. Also, new innovative, digital tools can be used to work toward these goals. As expressed in its *Approved by Tomorrow* manifesto, Euroconsumers is convinced that empowered consumers can accelerate the battle against food waste. Change is possible - but consumers, policy makers and the food industry must work together to make it happen.

“Tackling food waste is a joint effort that requires ambitious engagement from both consumers and businesses. That is why, at Euroconsumers, we want to reach out to partners in the food and tech industry to develop practical solutions and consumer empowering tools that will enable us to reach the necessary goal of reducing food waste together.” **Els Bruggeman, Head of Policy and Enforcement director at Euroconsumers**

About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people, Euroconsumers is the world’s leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer’s rights. Our organisations work together with BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, and Consumers International to ensure consumers are safe, that markets are fair and benefit from honest relations with businesses and authorities.

