



Leonardo Da Vinci

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## ForWaRD Regional Report Germany

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**Country: Germany**

**Partner: European Retail Academy**

**Authors: Prof.Dr.Bernd Hallier**

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## DOCUMENT HISTORY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION TO GERMANY

Germany is in the center of Western Europe – and after the reunification in 1990 it has about 80 million people. It is an aging society and the forecast for 2050 is 70 million people, but immigration could change the situation. The age-structure is important for all the social system: the young people being employed pay for all those going into retirement. If there are not enough people to pay for the social security – then it will hit those being not able to compete for physical survival!

After the reunification Berlin became capital of Germany again – after the provisional capital for former West Germany in Bonn. Nevertheless two million people from the former East Germany changed their location to the West, because due to the lack of development during the socialistic time job opportunities are still better in the western part.

Compared with other countries in Europe Germany has a rather stable economy: also as by constitution the “market economy” was enlarged by the terminus but also content to “social market economy”. In this context rich counties of the 16 German regions support poorer regions – or after the reunification western counties support financially the reconstruction in the East.

Last but not least has Germany a good mix of big companies and many SMEs which are very innovative.

## 2. FINDINGS OF NATIONAL/REGIONAL INVESTIGATION OF FOOD WASTE AND FOOD RECOVERY

**2.1. Please, generally sum up the data, figures and statistics of the waste generated (if data are available) and of existing practices for recovery by your own investigation on national level, for example by desktop research, from internet and from publications, from official statistics and so on.**

In Germany there had been no specific recommendations about food recovery or food waste . Only after the film Taste the Waste ([www.tastethewaste.com](http://www.tastethewaste.com)) at first Cofresco as a branded goods producers started a study about waste at consumer-level ([www.cofresco.de](http://www.cofresco.de)) and EHI Retail Institute released data from a retail-panel about not-sold/donated/recycled food.

The University of Applied Sciences Muenster started a study of identification of causes for food waste ( [www.fh-muenster.de](http://www.fh-muenster.de)) – and a network started [www.essen.pr-gateway.de/save-food-statt-lebensmittelverschwendung](http://www.essen.pr-gateway.de/save-food-statt-lebensmittelverschwendung) : save food instead of wasting it.

The European Retail Academy introduced FORWARD at the following homepages :

- 07.12.2012 [www.european-retail-academy.org/ERM](http://www.european-retail-academy.org/ERM)
- 07.01.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org/AgribusinessForum](http://www.european-retail-academy.org/AgribusinessForum)
- 03.02.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org](http://www.european-retail-academy.org)
- 08.02.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org/EUCVOT](http://www.european-retail-academy.org/EUCVOT)
- 20.03.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org/AgribusinessForum](http://www.european-retail-academy.org/AgribusinessForum)
- 15.04.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org](http://www.european-retail-academy.org)
- 15.04.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org/ERM](http://www.european-retail-academy.org/ERM)
- 15.04.2013 [www.european-retail-academy.org/EUCVOT](http://www.european-retail-academy.org/EUCVOT)

The messages were the kick-off of FORWARD , the logo and the German panel to make the initiative known.

### 3. EXISTING MATERIALS IN YOUR COUNTRY

#### 3.1. Is there any kind (online, personal, school etc.) of education and information available for charities or companies about food waste in your country?

Not under the label „food waste“ but under „Wohlfahrt/Charities“ there are the following big organizations in Germany responsible :

AWO – [www.awo.org](http://www.awo.org)

Caritas – [www.caritas.de](http://www.caritas.de)

Diakonie – [www.diakonie.de](http://www.diakonie.de)

Red Cross – [www.drk.de](http://www.drk.de)

Tafeln/Food Banks – [www.tafel.de](http://www.tafel.de)

But with the exception of the Tafel they do not publish the volume of food which they get or they buy by money being donated.

At universities or in schools there is no special curriculum “food waste” in Germany . Discussions only started in 2011/2012 after the launch of the film “Taste the Waste”(www.tastethewaste.com) by Valentin Thurn – which was supported for dissemination in schools by the Federal German Ministry of Consumer Protection. The topic was highlighted then in the press and in tv. – Due to the extreme examples and also volume estimates the film became very controversial for all the food chains : it was interpreted as an attack on the sector. The Ministry agreed to get into talks with all players about a check-up of data.

Based on the data of the film of Thurn of 20 million tons of waste and discussions afterwards within different partners the EHI Retail Institute developed the following calculation for the flow-chart of products from agriculture/processing via distribution towards consumers :

- agriculture/processing inclusive bakers, butchers and catering : 13 million tons (as the difference of waste at the distribution- and consumer level)
- retail according to EHI-panel 310.000 tons at 41.000 outlets : with the main critical volumes :
 

bread/cakes etc.in self-service	: 10.4 percent of volume
instore baking shops	: 6.5 percent
fruit and vegetables	: 5.1 percent
meat/fish	: 2.1 percent
milkproducts	: 1.6 percent
- According to a study of Cofresco “Wegwerfen von Lebensmitteln/Throwing away food” ([www.cofresco.de](http://www.cofresco.de)) the consumers in Germany throw away per person 80 kg food annually.

As a new initiative V.Thurn now created a platform for consumers where they can offer the rest of food in their refrigerators before going on holidays ([www.foodsharing.de](http://www.foodsharing.de)). This food-sharing platform got lots of visitors according to Thurn at a report at the Fusions Meeting in Stuttgart.

## 4. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

Please, translate all answers received and add all of your result from online questionnaires into common online tool online.

### Charities

#### 4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. What was your research methodology in getting data from charities? Please describe in detail (eg. where you got the list of charities from, how did you contact them, how did they provide data etc.)

4.2.2. How easy was it to get information?

4.3. What is your general impression: what are the major fields where they need development, learning?

4.3.1. What are those they are really interested in, keen on learning about?

4.3.2. What are those that they already know very well and do not need to learn about?

The first contact came via a booth of the national German Food Bank / Die Tafel in Cologne at the annual meeting of the Associations of Retail and Food Producers. In the follow-up with the national HQ the questionnaire was answered : but it also was made clear that only local partners have the detailed knowledge.

With four of the local partners telephone talks started after getting their numbers out of google –then the Roesrath food bank was visited – and had to be visited again as the volunteers did not want to be cited in a questionnaire without the lawyer of their organisation.

The other big national charities AWO, Caritas, Diakonie and Red Cross were contacted several times by e-mail : but the never answered.

#### Findings Charities/Food Banks

Insofar there have been only two real interviews with food banks – one with the HQ and another local one in the city of Roesrath . With three others had been some telephone-exchanges, but not the ability to discuss the questionnaire in detail.

-The HQ Food Bank Germany (Die Tafel) is the roof for more than 900 local/regional units, which are all legally independent and also organized by individual structures.

Therefore there is

not a list available for the public to contact all of them in one mail : one has to go via [www.google.de](http://www.google.de) and to check for each city for example by the input “Tafel Roesrath” the contact-data.

-The HQ has not a central list of people in need : this is part of the local partners and perhaps also of data security laws.

-The HQ Food Bank Germany is ready to support FORWARD. They would like to have better contacts via the internet, better info about over-supply, better transfer of know-how.

-The are interested in contacts with retail organizations, Corporate Social Responsibility programs, exchange of experience concerning food recovery programs or food waste reduction. They would like to use a FORWARD internet platform.

-The interview with the local food bank confirmed the statements of the retailers concerning the cooperation based on the trust-system. Concerning people in need there is a government-certificate to entitle them to get food free of charge from the food-banks.

-In Roesrath the food bank is part of the church with housewives as volunteers. They are fully occupied by the daily operations – and not at all interested in further IT-documentation or learning programs.

-But in a system of 900 local food banks surely the HQ can help to find a pioneer food bank on the local level for a test.

-The interview at the local food bank was done in presence of a lawyer of that food bank ! Also for Bergisch Gladbach (neighbour location) this was a precondition for a potential interview !

## Companies

### 4.4. Methodology

**4.4.1. What was your research methodology in getting data from companies? Please describe in detail (eg. where you got the list of companies from, how did you contact them, how did they provide data etc.)**

**4.4.2. How easy was it to get information?**

#### Methodology Companies

The annual conference of retailers and food producers was taken as a launch of the questionnaires. Both associations were contacted in a follow-up several times by e-mail: parallel direct contacts in retail were approached by phone and by mail. Altogether about 50 people had been contacted.

All bakers, butchers, retailers up to 20 stores in the panel had been visited personally – mostly after advanced telephone calls. Retail HQs had been e-mailed and phoned (in all cases several times before getting response).

-Mostly firstly they were sceptical due to the political discussions in the public about the film of V.Thurn. –Others did not admit this but did not cooperate after getting the questionnaire (for example the associations of retailers and producers).

-Other first responses concerned studies for the EU: “We do not know what with the data will be done” – “Other EU-questionnaires did bring us no return on the investment of time”.

#### Findings about participating companies

-The panel consists out of a mix of the following categories: one meat-factory, two one-store butchers, two two-store bakers, four one-store retailers, two four-store retailers, one retailer with 22 stores, and big chains operating in several regions or even nationally like Dohle HQ, Tengelmann/Kaiser HQ, REWE HQ and METRO HQ which cover together some thousand stores via their networks either directly or via franchise indirectly.

-The area range of activities of the players up to twenty stores is local/regional – the big ones are nationally acting. Nevertheless all systems give some degrees of freedom for the operational local level.

-Nearly all admitted to have already thrown away food – but not on a regular basis. The small bakers and butchers try to recycle not sold products in their daily production into new products or meals. – Sometimes bread goes also to horse-feeding or some meat to pets of good customers as a kind of loyalty-program.



-All respondents of retail declare to be ready/to do passing on food to the local food banks . Only one retailer restricted his offer to water after being confronted by a lawyer of a customer claiming to have become ill after the consumption of his donated food.

-At bakers and butchers it is the owner who decides what to do with over-supply. With the exception of Tengelmann where a central food waste manager is placed at the Corporate Social Responsibility department – the other retailers put the function into the category-managers as well in the regions as also on store-level ! Overall data (among that also waste) are collected by the central financial controller.

-In retail generally waste comes from wrong orders – although all chains (and even the one-store Franchise-partners) get a lot of IT-dispo-support from the HQs. REWE even integrates local weather-forecasts into its deliveries ! Shelf-optimization was in Germany already a topic in the 90ies!

-A measure on store-level to get ridd of oversupply are discounts of up to 30 percent when products come to the end of their life-cycle.

-All retailers claim to work together with food-banks : but without any written contracts.

-Food banks collect the food at least weekly , but often even daily with their own transport and cooling boxes.

-Restrictions to hand over food can be sometimes legal points (hygienegarantee) or also contracts of suppliers (mentioned only once – but if this is mentioned by one retailer it surely exists also with others!). A mental obstacle is the MHD-data understood in Germany as a final date for consumption and not as best quality assured.

-Only Tengelmann/Kaisers showed interest in an internet-training about food-waste or a joint electronic platform with food-banks.

#### **4.5. What is your general impression:**

##### **4.5.1. What are the major reasons for producing food waste?**

No one wants to produce food waste ! Over-production results from a gap between estimated sales and actual sales. Insofar dispo-systems are important for retail and cooperation with producers via ECR : Efficient Consumer Response.

##### **4.5.2. What are the major obstacles for getting food waste to people in need?**

In general eatable products to pass on is not a big problem – the MHD (maximum date to eat is a mental barrier : it should be : best quality guaranteed).

**4.5.3. What are those they are really interested in, keen on learning about?**

Topics between the food bank HQ and local partners differ ! Learning in retail could be an additional qualification in CSR Corporate Social Responsibility programs : but it was not mentioned explicitly.

**4.5.4. What are those that they already know very well and do not need to learn about?**

Industry partners – not being in the panel – are sure to know better their problems and solutions than external EU-consultants.

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