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FoRWaRD Regional Report

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Partner: AVACA TECHNOLOGIES S.A.

Authors: Mattheos Kakaris

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DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY



GREECE IN SHORT

Geography

Area: 131,957 km² (50,949 sq mi)

Water: 86,69%

Cities: Capital--Athens (pop. 3.07 million). Other cities-- Thessaloniki (0.79 million), Patras (214,580), Heraklion (173,450).

Terrain: Mostly mountains with ranges extending into the sea as peninsulas or chains of islands with 13 regions. It also includes of rocky conditions and mountainous terrain.

Climate: Greece has three well defined climatological areas; Mediterranean, Alpine, and Mid-European Temperate.

People

Nationality: Greek(s).

Population (July 2012 est.): 10,8 million.

Annual population growth rate (2012 est.): 0.06%.

Ethnic groups: Primarily Greeks (93.76%), but there are small groups of Albanians (4.32%), Bulgarians (0,39%), Romanians (0,23%), Ukrainians (0,18%), Pakistani (0,14%), Russians (0,12%), Georgians (0,12%), and Indians (0,09%).

Religion: Orthodox Christianity.

Language: Greek (official).

Education: Free and compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 15. Literacy-96%.

Health: Infant mortality rate—9,21 births/1,000 births. Life expectancy—77,48 years for men; 82,79 years for women.

Work force (3.68 million, 2012): Services--85%; industry --12%; agriculture--3%. Unemployment rate is 26%.

Government

Type: Parliamentary republic, Unitary state.

Constitution: was created by the Fifth Revisional Parliament of the Hellenes and entered into force in 1975.

Branches: Executive--president (chief of state), Legislative-- Greek Parliament: 300 members, Judicial-- three Supreme Courts: the Court of Cassation (Άρειος Πάγος), the Council of State (Συμβούλιο της Επικρατείας) and the Chamber of Accounts (Ελεγκτικό Συνέδριο).

Subdivisions: Thirteen regions subdivided into a total of 325 municipalities.

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory.

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

The global community has recently recognized the phenomenon of food wastage and its serious consequences, not only in developing but also in developed countries. According to data from the World Food Organisation (FAO), around one third of the world's annual food production ie 1.3 billion tons worth 1 trillion dollars, is not consumed. In developing countries, 95% of the food waste takes place unintentionally in the early stages of the food chain: production, storage, and packaging. On the contrary, in developed countries like Greece, food wasting takes place in the final stages of the chain.

The main reasons of food waste are:

- High quality standards, with emphasis on product appearance,
- very short expiration dates,
- and bad consumer behaviours, such as excessive quantity purchases and preparation of large food portions.

The total food waste generation estimates for Greece are presented below in relation to the EU average

	Manufacturing	Households	Other sectors	Total
EU27	34 755 711	37 701 761	16 820 000	89 277 472
Greece	73 081	412 758	2 000	488 000

2006 EUROSTAT data (EWC_09_NOT_093), Various national sources

Currently there is no concrete and detailed data available for food wasting in Greece. However this phenomenon is nowadays more important due to the effects of the economic crisis on the Greek society. According to the latest official data from the Greek Statistical Office, the unemployment rate in July 2012 raised from 17.8% (2011) to 25.1%, a percentage that corresponds to 1,261,604 persons without work. Moreover, Greece has the highest percentage (13,2%) of poor workers in the Eurozone.

According to 2010 data, the percentage of the population at risk of poverty had reached 27,7%, (1.3 million people). This number ranks Greece in the sixth worst place amongst EU countries, just below Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary. Taking into account the economic developments in Greece over the last years, this percentage is expected to have a big increase.

Greece has the highest percentage in terms of material deprivation in EU-27, while extreme material deprivation rises up to 11,2%.

Although many statistics on unemployment and poverty had recently been published in Greece and had attracted public attention, there is currently no specific data on the amount of food that is wasted. Nevertheless it is estimated that every European throws away 179 kgs of food each year. In the EU 89 million tons of food (worth 100 billion euros) are thrown away annually, not including the food rejected in agricultural production. The food that ends up in the trash in the EU would be enough to feed twice all the starving people of the world.

A recent study conducted by the Harokopio University in 2012, which is the first one conducted in Greece in the field of food waste¹, identified some attitudes and behaviours of households in Greece in regards to food waste generation and prevention. According to this study, Greeks have positive attitudes towards food waste prevention. However their habits, which are close to the literature suggestions for reducing food waste generation, are driven to a large extent by the financial recession.

The study identified various methods for reducing the food waste (figure 1).

¹ <http://bit.ly/ZY18lm>



Figure 1: Adopted actions yielded the difference in amount of food that is thrown away.

Greeks are usually concerned about the expiration date of the products (milk, eggs and cheese) and they often throw away expired food items, which do not have any signs of deterioration (figure 2).

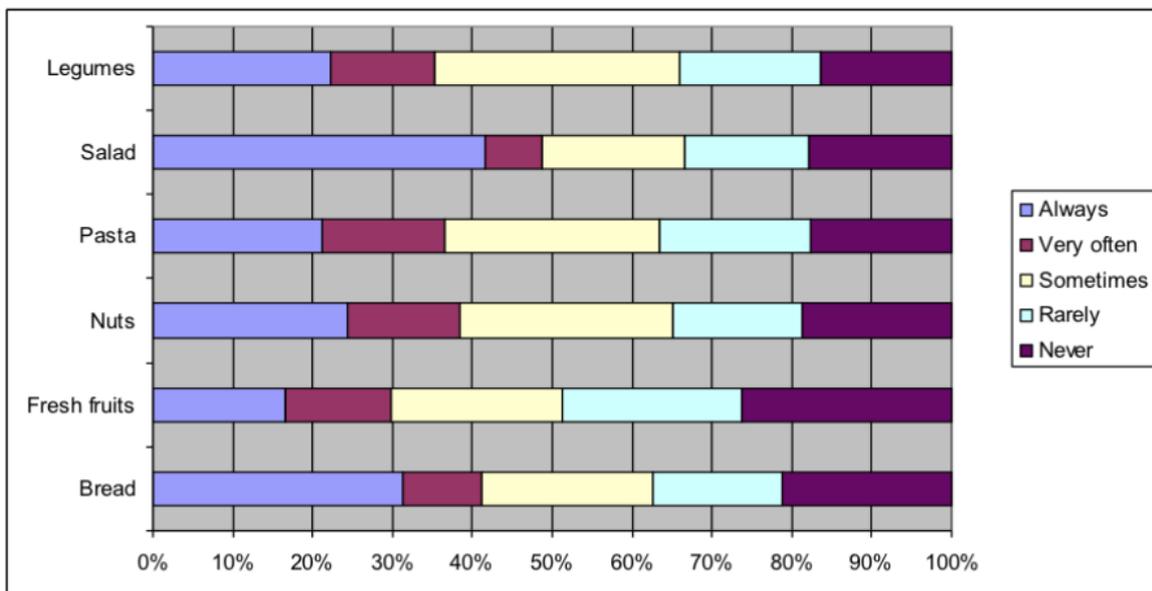


Figure 2: How often do you throw away food items which are past their “best before” date, but don’t have any signs of deterioration

The major disposal route for cooked food is the waste bin, followed by its use as animal feed. Bread is the most common type of cooked food that is usually thrown away (figure 3). For fruits and vegetables the major disposal route is again the waste bin. Regarding the food waste in liquid form, it ends up in the drain as expected.

Most Greeks are not familiar with methods of reusing waste food, such as composting. Of those who tried composting (approximately the 10%), the waste stream in focus was the leftovers from fruits and vegetables.

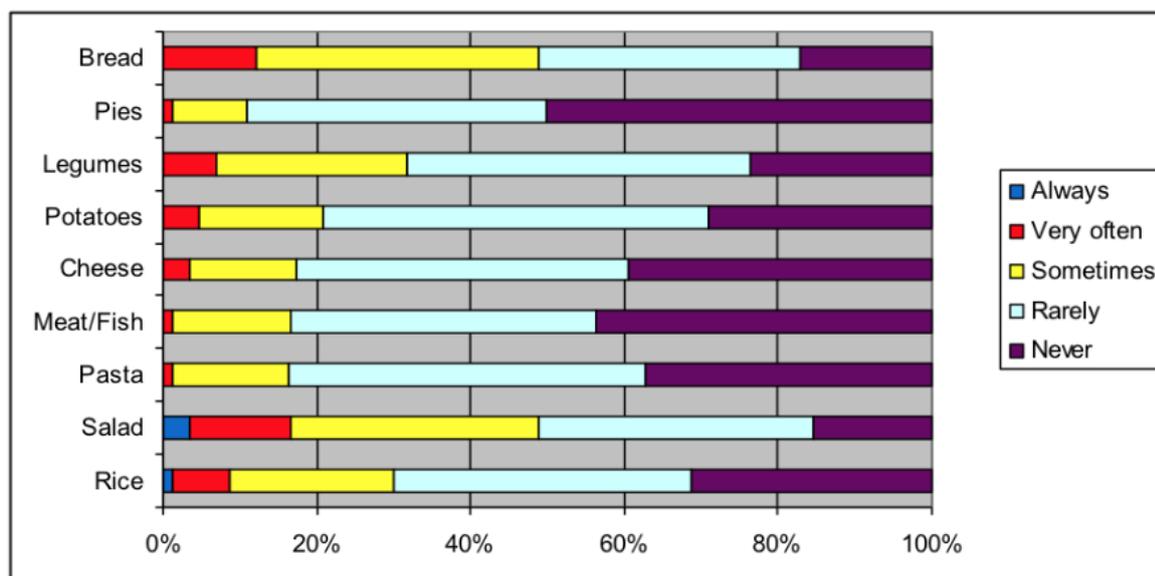


Figure 3: How often do you discard cooked food from the following items?

3. EXISTING MATERIALS IN YOUR COUNTRY

By recognizing the magnitude and consequences of food wasting in developed countries, the United Nations Programme for Environment (UNEP) and the FAO, in cooperation with specialized NGOs, started a very important campaign, the "Think. Eat. Save. Reduce Your Foodprint ", which focuses on reducing food waste by consumers, food companies and retailers.

According to the official announcement of this programme, the success of the campaign depends on the participation of all of us: every consumer and each family, the retail chains, schools and voluntary organizations.

Within this framework, Greece is reacting to food waste by organizing various actions:

- [BOROUME](#) is a non-profit organisation that fights food waste by organizing the distribution of surplus food for charity throughout Greece. It was founded in January 2012 although the initial idea was conceived in 2011. The main target of BOROUME, is to collect tons of fresh fruit, vegetables, bread and cooked food that end up in the garbage every day, and distribute it where it is needed. Boroume envisions to take a major step in the fight against undernourishment and towards decreasing food waste, in the easiest and least expensive way possible. Moreover Boroume often organizes campaigns to raise awareness about Food Wasting.
- The Greek "[Food Bank](#)" was founded in 1995. The idea of the Food Bank was developed by John Van Hengel in 1967 in Phoenix, Arizona (USA). The idea spread to America as well as Europe. The Greek "Food Bank" is a charitable,

non-profit institution (private legal entity) and is dedicated to the fight against hunger and reducing wastage.

Currently in Greece there are many actions initiated because of the financial recession that exist thanks to the sensitivity of average people and maintain a charitable character. Although these actions significantly help people that face extreme material deprivation, they don't seem to fight food wastage since people buy food (usually types of food with the longest expiration dates i.e. cans, legumes, rice etc.) and immediately donate it to the appropriate organizations.

- [OLI MAZI BOROUME](#) is a voluntary action organized by [SKAI](#) (TV and Radio) that raises awareness about people's needs and gathers food or even clothes and medicines. This action started about a year and a few months ago and it is estimated that more than 725 tons of food has been gathered in total. The campaign to collect food motivated thousands of people across Greece. 20 tons have been donated from Super Markets, but the most important contribution was from everyday people.

It is important to note that most actions, such as OLI MAZI BOROUME are organized with the collaboration of Archdiocese of Athens. In most cases, the food that is gathered is given to the Archdiocese who then distributes it to the people in need with the aid of the local churches. Although the contribution of the local churches is crucial, the Archdiocese avoids to publish statistical information about its contribution for ethical reasons. Nevertheless it is estimated that more than 250.000 people daily are able to have access to warm food thanks to the contribution of the Church of Greece.

4. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

Charities

4.1. Methodology

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

All the charities were found via online research, personal knowledge and widely available information via the media.

The charities were contacted via email and/or telephone and the majority provided the data via a telephone interview.

Most of the charities are initiatives by concerned citizens with limited resources.

4.1.2. How easy was it to get information?

We did not encounter major difficulties in retrieving the information as the majority were happy to speak about their activities and contribute to the project objectives.

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

There is serious lack of food and safety knowledge.

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

Food and safety and food collection models

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

They are very comfortable interacting with food donors. They consider their approach methods very effective.

Companies

4.3. Methodology

4.3.1. 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.)

Less than 1 in 5 companies contacted actually agreed to provide information. There was no predefined list. Companies were targeted randomly mostly via a direct face to face approach as we did not expect they would get back to us via email or telephone. What we experienced was that small companies active in local and regional level were much more open to speak to us and provide information than larger companies. Most data provision took place during face to face meetings at their premises.

4.3.2. How easy was it to get information?

It was somewhat difficult to obtain information as less than 1 in 5 companies approached agreed to dedicate some time for our cause.

4.4. What is your general impression:

4.4.1. What are the major reasons for producing food waste?

It seems to be difficult for them to predict accurately the production quantities

4.4.2. What are the major obstacles for getting food waste to people in need?

Transportation, mainly due to the high cost of fuel

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

They all feel they should know more and do more about food safety

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

They are confident regarding the established communication channels with the suppliers and customers