Food Safety in the EU
Fostering Innovation and Securing Consumer Protection Throughout the Agri-Food Chain

Tuesday 24th January 2017
Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels
Overview

Citizens of the European Union enjoy one of the highest standards of food safety in the world, yet WHO estimates that every year in the European region 23 million people fall ill due to foodborne diseases, resulting in 5000 deaths. Even in the developed world, the ingestion and handling of contaminated food cause widespread illnesses, resulting in an increased burden on public health and significant economic implications. The agri-food sector represents a lion’s share of the EU economy, providing around 44 million jobs; 7.5% of Europeans are employed in production and processing, generating 3.7% of the total value added. Balancing the needs of industry, whilst simultaneously ensuring consumer protection and encouraging sustainability, is a primary challenge in the contemporary European political climate.

In order to minimize the risks to public health and to the wider economic system, the European Union has put in place several legislative tools aimed at enhancing food safety. With a budget of €1.9 million between 2014 and 2020, the first comprehensive Financial Framework Regulation for the Food Chain provides finance for controls, measures to improve animal and plant health and scientific research, as well as awareness-raising and information programmes. Another main goal of EU food safety policy is to ensure sustainability of the food system. To this end, in 2015 the Commission has included the reduction of food waste in its Circular Economy Package, and established a new EU Platform on food losses and food waste to define measures to be adopted.

Consumer protection on food safety is ensured via early warning systems. Of these, the RASFF is the EU’s first response mechanism for serious health threats caused by food or feed. It allows for quick intervention, facilitating communication among member States, allowing risks to be contained before they become harmful to consumers. By December 2016 the new FIC regulation will also enter fully into force, ensuring that nutrient and harmonised allergens information is legible and clearly displayed on food products.

Besides governance, innovation drives development, with GMOs and GM foods as a response to food security, but also new technological food contact materials and new smart agricultural techniques.

The introduction of digital technologies within the agri-food chain is of great promise, but sector-wide inclusion is yet to occur.

The scope of actions required to ensure food safety is broad and encompassing, yet several challenges still remain. The issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is emerging as one of the most troubling health problems of modern times. Europe’s increasingly ageing population is also a matter of concern, the elderly and infants being the most exposed to the health risks connected to food safety. Moreover, damage to the image of food safety and a fall in consumer confidence in the EU would have severe repercussions for the whole industry. Ensuring safety standards will have a cost, and how much of it will have to be shouldered by private actors remains to be seen.

This timely symposium will provide an invaluable opportunity for experts, policy makers, NGOs and other key stakeholders to discuss the latest European regulatory initiatives surrounding food safety, consumer protection, and innovation, in order to foster a resilient and sustainable agri-food chain. The symposium will also allow delegates to assess the current and future challenges facing the global food system, and to share best practice from across Europe.

Why Attend?

- Assess the current food safety framework in Europe and discuss its upcoming novelties
- Discover innovations aimed at improving safety in the agri-food chain
- Learn about the impact of the SDGs on the approach to food safety
- Build awareness of the actions in place to reduce food waste and to increase public consciousness on the subject
- Debate the range of consumer protection measures in place in Europe
- Take part in interactive discussions on the need for traceability as a means to ensure transparency

Who Should Attend?

- Health Professionals
- Public Health Authorities
- National Governmental Organisations
- Local Governmental Organisations
- Local Authority Officers and Councillors
- Pharmaceutical Industries
- Veterinary Services Providers
- Social Services
- Health Promotion Advisers
- Medical Associations
- Trade Unions
- Employers’ Organisations
- Public Health Unions
- Health Research Institutes
- International Centres for Health Protection
- Health Networks
- Allergic Patient Associations
- Charitable Foundations
- Associations of Schools of Public Health
- Health Forums
- Legal Health Professionals
- Academics and Researchers
- Agriculture Producers
- Consumers Associations

Food is a massive industry, and we must protect it. But more than that, food is about communities. It is about growth where people live. It is about investing not in abstract concepts, but in real, tangible benefits that people can see. And this is exactly where I believe Europe’s research and innovation capacity can bring enormous added value.”

- Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

October 2016
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Programme

09:15 Registration and Morning Refreshments
10:00 Chair’s Welcome and Opening Remarks
10:10 Evaluating the European Legislative Framework on Food and Feed Safety
   • Strengthening Protections: What to Expect from the New EU Regulation on Controls Along the Agri-Food Chain
   • Discussing the 2015 EU Action Plan on Circular Economy: Effects on the Food Safety Framework
   • Risk Assessment Mechanisms in the EU: Examining EFSA’s Role, Procedures and the Latest Guidance Document
   • Assessing Outstanding Challenges in the Existing EU Food Safety System: the Compliance Costs of Standard Setting
   • Recommendations for Future Policy Developments to Reconcile Safety and Security Issues
10:40 First Round of Discussions
11:10 Morning Coffee Break
11:30 Towards a More Sustainable Agri-Food Chain: Reducing Food Waste and Improving the Overall Sustainability of Production Processes
   • The ‘EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste’: Challenging Existing Habits by Fostering the Fight Against Food Waste
   • Pressing Ahead with Sustainability: Resource-Efficiency in the Agri-Food Chain
   • Minimizing the Risks Related to the Re-Use of Animal By-Products
   • Analysing the Role of Food Business Operators
12:00 Second Round of Discussions
12:30 Networking Lunch
13:30 Fostering Innovation in the Agri-Food Industry
   • Establishing New Legal Frameworks for Investment in Research and Development: Boosting Private Sector Involvement
   • Discussing GMOs and Novel Foods: Examining the EU Approach and the New Regulation on Novel Food
   • Evaluating the Potential for Applying Data-Based Technologies in the Agri-Food Sector
   • Sharing Innovators’ Best Practice and Challenges
14:00 Third Round of Discussions
14:30 Afternoon Coffee Break
14:50 Exploring the Scope of Consumer Protection and Food Controls in the EU
   • Traceability as an Instrument of Transparency in the Agri-Food Chain: Protecting Quality Whilst Informing Customers
   • Analysing the Significance of the FIC Regulation: the Provision of Allergens and Nutrients Information on Food Labels
   • Assessing the Efficiency of the Food Safety Enforcement and the RASFF
   • Addressing the Issue of Food Fraud and the New AAC System
15:20 Fourth Round of Discussions
15:50 Chair’s Summary and Closing Comments
16:00 Networking Reception
16:30 Close

* Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice *

Event Details

Date: Tuesday 24th January 2017
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels

Speakers Include:

✓ Ladislav Miko, Deputy Director General for Food Safety, DG SANTE, European Commission
✓ Renate Sommer, Member of the European Parliament
✓ Camille Perrin, Senior Food Policy Officer, BEUC
✓ Hélène Simonin, Director Food, Environment & Health, EDA – European Dairy Association
✓ Guilherme Serodio, Project Manager, Consumer Revolution, CoRe
✓ Maeve Howe, Sustainability Policy Adviser, Euro Coop
✓ Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General, Copa Cogeca
✓ Jim Bracken, Sustainability Director, GS1 AISBL
✓ Kate Trollope, Editor, EU Food Policy
✓ B.M.J. van der Meulen, Professor of Food Law, Wageningen University

Forthcoming Events

✓ Young People’s Sexual and Reproductive Health: Towards Improved Standards for Sexual Education in Europe
  12th January 2017
✓ Finalizing the Unitary Patent Package: Challenges and Ways Forward
  8th February 2017
✓ Occupational Safety and Health: Striving for Happy and Healthy European Workplaces
  23rd February 2017
✓ The Future of Mobile Health in Europe: Empowering Citizens Through Technologically Integrated Healthcare
  28th February 2017
✓ Cultural and Creative Industries in Europe: Maximising the Contribution of Culture towards Social and Economic Development
  1st March 2017

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