60 years of European Integration: Achievements and challenges

Food Safety in the EU – State of play and challenges for the future

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Our mission

To make Europe a safer, healthier place where citizens are well protected and the EU’s health and agrifood sectors can thrive. Our main aims are to:

- protect and improve public health
- ensure Europe’s food is safe and wholesome
- protect the health and welfare of farm animals
- protect the health of crops and forests, and
- support growth and competitiveness in the health and agrifood sectors

Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE)
Food Safety in the EU: Where are we coming from?

- **1960's**: first European rules on food safety and animal health
- **Late 90s**: Food safety crisis: BSE ("Mad cow" disease), Dioxin...
- **April 1997**: Commission's Green Paper on food law
- **December 1997**: European Council's declaration on food safety
- **1999**: DG SANCO is created
- **2000**: Commission's White Paper on food safety
- **2002**: Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 on "General Food Law"
General Food Law Objectives

1. High level of protection of human health and consumers' interests

2. Effective functioning of the internal market
Key features of the General Food Law

• From ‘farm’ to ‘fork’
• Common definitions, general principles and requirements underpinning EU and Member States' food law

Risk Assessment ↔ Risk Management ↔ Risk Communication

• Science-based legislation - Creation of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
• Focus on the prevention and management of crises through a set of tools and procedures
THE FOOD CHAIN SYSTEM OVERVIEW

1. Primary production
   - Livestock
   - Aquaculture
   - Fisheries
   - Milk, eggs

2. Harvesting / Slaughtering / Fishing
   - Cutting
   - Milling
   - Brewing
   - Juicing
   - Fishing
   - Collecting

3. Processing / Manufacturing
   1st stage: cutting, milling, brewing
   2nd stage: blending, smoking, preservation, mixing
   - Canning
   - Packaging
   - Modified atmosphere
   - Labelling (B2B / retail)

4. Packaging / Labelling
   - Canning
   - Packaging
   - Modified atmosphere
   - Labelling (B2B / retail)

5. Storage
   - Storage length
   - Storage conditions (temperature, atmosphere, humidity)

6. Placing on the market / Distribution
   - Retail
   - Wholesale
   - Direct sale of small amounts of products
   - Internet sale

7. Consumption / Consumer handling
   - Household
   - Catering / Restaurants
   - Home storage

8. Transportation
   - Animal by-products

Inputs:
- Plant reproductive material
- Plant protection products
- Veterinary medicinal products
- Water
- Soil, fertilisers, manure

Modified from: Commission SWD (2013) 516 final 'A fitness check of the food chain: State of play and next steps'
Achievements

• All EU consumers have access to **equally safe food** (harmonised safety rules)

• All EU consumers are **equally informed** on the content of foodstuffs they buy and/or consume (harmonised labelling)

• Possible **food crisis or food frauds** are handled efficiently and rapidly across the EU (e.g. African Swine Fever and Avian Flue outbreaks, horse instead of beef meat in Lasagna in 2013)
Current challenges

• What role for science-based decision-making?

• Democratic accountability of EU decisions
  ➔ "Comitology" reform

• How to ensure effective enforcement in the digital era?

• How to articulate food safety, sustainable agriculture and consumption, healthy diets?

➔ Towards a comprehensive food policy?
Looking ahead
Food safety in future – is it for granted?
Drivers used for scenario building

- Social cohesion
- EU economic growth
- Technology uptake
- Global trade
- Food values
- Agro-food industry structure
- Natural resource depletion
- Global population growth
- Climate change
Scenarios

Local Food

Global Food

Pharma Food

2050?

2017
Thank you for your attention!