



GENERAL FOOD LAW'S
FITNESS CHECK



APPROVAL OF NEW NOVEL
FOOD REGULATION



CAP NEGOTIATIONS ON
FOOD SCHEMES FOR SCHOOL
CHILDREN



EU PROJECTS AND EVENTS



NEWSLETTER

Dear Members,

This November Issue brings you the latest news and developments from the European Parliament including the European Council's official approval of the revised **Novel Foods Regulation** following Parliament's vote on the legislation last month, information on an **exchange of views** between the Parliament and the European Commission on the **current state of the General Food Law Fitness Check** and finally, an update on the **state of play of trilogue negotiations** for the Commission's proposals on the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables,

bananas and milk in educational establishments.

Calls for **EU Projects and upcoming food related events** can be found on the last pages of the newsletter.

As always we look forward to hearing from you and hope that you enjoy reading.

Best Wishes to You All,

Floriana Cimmarusti
Secretary General of SAFE

Exchange of views between the European Parliament and the Commission on the General Food Law's fitness check



On November 10, SAFE attended the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) meeting, where European

Commission officials discussed with members of the European Parliament the current state of the general food law's fitness check. Once again, the European Food Safety Authority's role and independence were put into question.

The General Food Law and the Fitness Check

Launched in 2002, the general food law (GFL) of the European Union is a regulation that encompasses the principles, requirements and procedures that define food and feed law in the EU, from farmers to consumers. The GFL especially sets out the base of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The fitness check is a comprehensive sectorial review of a particular regulatory framework, which intends to determine if the legislation is fit for purpose. As part of the Commission's Smart Regulation agenda, the fitness check is intended to reduce inefficient or redundant legislation, while improving the overall quality of its services to the European population.

Exchange of views between the European Commission and the European Parliament

Ladislav Miko, Acting Director-General of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (**DG Santé**) of the European Commission, started the discussion and his statement by explaining the general purpose of the fitness check. He then proceeded to develop on the evaluation of the RASFF and EFSA, claiming both to be working in general quite well, despite some of the often-timely internal processes that hinder information transmission to the public.

Nevertheless, Mr Miko spent an important part of his speech talking about EFSA's much-disputed independence, during which he insisted on two major points. First, people usually associate the notion of "interest" with that of "conflict of interest", and therefore

jump often too quickly to the conclusion that EFSA's staff members lack independence. Second, EFSA scientific capacities depend on member states and the pool of top-level scientists they make available to the Authority. He then left the floor to members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and awaited questions.

MEP Françoise Grosstête (Group of the European People's Party, Christian Democrats, France) first stressed out the fact that the food sector is prominently composed of many small and medium-sized enterprises, for which regulation is often too complex and burdensome. She then addressed the issue of misleading meat labels, before criticizing the European Commission for not pushing harder for labels to clearly state the origins of the animals inside products containing processed meat. Finally, she wanted to know when the Commission will submit its report on trans fats.

MEP Renate Sommer (Group of the European People's Party, Christian Democrats, Germany) praised EFSA's overall work, adding she thinks consumers are well protected. She nonetheless asked whether EFSA did need more staff in order to overcome its time-related issues. She then expressed her feeling that legislation does not anymore fit the amount of work EFSA is being asked to produce, and asked what could be done not to overload the Authority. Finally, she wanted to know whether the Commission would take into account the online consultation proposed by citizens.

MEP Martin Haüsling (Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, Germany) underlined the issue of the relatively small pool of experts and staff made available to EFSA by member states. He then emphasized the need for decisive actions to be taken to fight bad dietary habits and the growing public health issue that is related to it. He finally pointed out the lack of transparency regarding the origins of meat and fish in the