



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants
Food hygiene and fraud

**EU AGRI-FOOD FRAUD NETWORK (EU FFN)
SKYPE MEETING
15 JUNE 2022
MINUTES**

Attendees:

Members: All Member States, NO, CH

Commission: DG SANTE, DG AGRI, DG TAXUD

1. THE AGRI-FOOD FRAUD NETWORK ACTIVITIES IN 2021

1.1. Data summary from the iRasff and AAC-FF system

The Commission summarised the activities of the Food Fraud Network for the year 2021. Data will also be available in the annual report of the Alert and Cooperation Network that will be published at the end of June. The report covers all the information shared last year in iRASFF as RASFF, non-compliance and food fraud notifications. 2021 has registered the highest number of notifications, follow-up and conversations for each component of ACN in comparison with previous years. Detailed statistics about fraud notifications have been presented regarding product categories notified, notifying countries, origin of the products and fraud categories. Also information about suspicions of fraud in RASFF and AAC (Administrative and Assistance Cooperation) notifications and number of feedbacks received from third countries on requests for outcome of investigations have been presented.

[acn_annual-report_2021-final.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

1.2. Report on the activity of Member States in iRasff and AAC-FF systems

The Commission presented a summary of the activities in the system in 2021. Individual performance reports showing the number of requests addressed to each country were sent to the network members in April 2022. The requests were divided into “replied”, “for attention”, “not replied” and “incomplete answer”. Members were invited to address the “not replied” and “incomplete answer” given in the system.

2. THE AGRI-FOOD FRAUD WEEKLY REPORTS & THE USE OF IRASFF: FOOD FRAUD VS NON-COMPLIANCE.

The Commission recalled the iRASFF notifications in the “Fats and oils” category, notably those related to olive oil. The analysis of the data for 2020 and 2021, show that some non-compliances were wrongly reported in the FF part of iRASFF. The typical case is about natural degradation of extra virgin olive oil to virgin olive oil, where it is difficult to demonstrate the intentionality and which should be considered in first instance as a non-compliance. The request should be then assigned as an AAC notification in iRasff. If after the investigation fraud elements are identified, the NC notification could be assigned to a food fraud category, so to involve the Food Fraud Network.

3. COOPERATION WITH CUSTOMS: THE CUSTOMS MANAGEMENT RISK SYSTEMS- AND RISK INFORMATION FORMS

3.1. CRMS (Customs Risk Management System)

The Customs Risk Management System (CRMS) is one of the five pillars of the Customs Risk Management Framework. The Customs risk management as well as the CRMS are legally based on the Union Customs Code (UCC) and in its implementing act.

CRMS is used for the exchange of risk related information between the Commission and Member States and within Member States when carrying out their risk analysis (e.g. communication between first customs office of entry and next office of entry to identify adversely known operators or for the exchange of information about results of controls that refer to security and safety risks: seizures that lead to “not load” messages, specific intelligence/information that has been obtained by MS, crisis management (e.g. COVID related issues imports of fake medicines...)).

CRMS is an electronic, encrypted system linking national risk analysis centres and all external border control points in the EU and the Commission and it is used by all Member States as well as Switzerland and Norway (under a security agreement) + Northern Ireland.

3.2. RIF (Risk Information Form)

It is the form used to exchange information. Customs of Member States and the Commission can issue them. The data available in a RIF include all the necessary information that will enable customs to target and perform their controls.

3.3. Cooperation of customs with other authorities

Customs play an important role at EU borders as they are responsible for controls covering a wide range of risks (both financial and non-financial). For some of them a more specific guidance is required which is based on the exchange of information with other specific competent authorities (such as for phytosanitary controls).

The Commission is currently working closely with Europol with a view to enhance cooperation. A study is currently running on the interoperability between TAXUD IT systems and the Europol data systems. The various possibilities regarding the exchange of information will be examined considering the legal framework, data protection limitations as well as IT infrastructure.

4. THE EU “BAMBOO-ZLING” ACTION: THE RESULTS

The Commission (DG SANTE) presented the results of the action, which lasted a year (from May 2021 to April 2022). The collaboration with customs through DG TAXUD was highlighted and the importance of the RIF was explained. Details on the number of cases of products blocked at the border and found on the market were given. It was shown that the majority of the goods controlled were offered online.

[Bamboo-zling \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

5. AN EU ACTION ON PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS?

The Commission (DG SANTE) presented a draft on a coordinated control plan on the illegal use of plant protection products (PPP), based on the data reported over the last years, especially 2020 and 2021 in iRasff. The future action would be based on the main pesticides reported, and should address the main known issues, such as parallel trade, unregistered operators for active substance and the usage of substandard approved active substances.

Belgium gave a presentation on fraud relating to plant protection products: main ports of entry and what the competent authority is doing to address the issue, also explaining the problem of the authorisation process at Member State’s level making it difficult to do efficient controls. Main fraud types found by the competent authority were explained and illustrated with examples

6. BTSF ACTIVITIES – IN PERSON TRAININGS RESTARTING, NEW E-LEARNING PROGRAMS UNDER REVIEW

The Commission updated the EUFFN about BTSF trainings related to food fraud and e-commerce, the development of e-learning modules and about BTSF trainings for non-EU countries.

7. CODEX CCFICS DRAFT GUIDELINES ON FOOD FRAUD

The Commission informed the FFN about the recent developments on the food fraud guidelines considered at international level. They will soon be shared with the Codex members for their comments. The draft guidelines could be submitted to the Codex Secretariat for consideration at the CCFICS26 in November 2022. SANTE confirmed that the EU position insists on the need to also cover the feed area and that FF related definitions (if retained in the final draft) should *a priori* not diverge from already considered FF definition (CEN definitions).

8. GUARDIA CIVIL: SAFFRON

Spanish Seprona gave an overview of a new *modus operandi* for adulterating saffron done by a Spanish company and with distribution to other Member States. The fraud consists of adding genetically modified gardenia extract imported from China and misdeclared as saffron.