



Expert Group on Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 titled: 'Working Group on Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 General Food Law'

Summary report of the meeting held on March 3rd 2014 in Brussels

The Commission, Norway and representatives from the following Member States were present: AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK.

Background:

- This was an introductory meeting between the European Commission and Member States in the context of the 'refit exercise' in which DG SANCO takes part and in particular of the Fitness Check of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 (General Food Law - GFL). The aim is to assess whether:
 - the fundamental objectives of the Regulation have been efficiently achieved
 - the tools in place have fully delivered
 - the Regulation captures and reflects policy trends of today and to what extent it fits the Union's institutional, legal, economic and political landscape.
 - the assessment will also focus on the potential for simplification.

Chapter III of GFL (provision pertaining to EFSA) will not be part of the 'fitness check'.

Meeting:

The meeting started with an introduction and a general presentation of GFL delivered by the Commission. The Commission outlined the objectives of the 'refit exercise' and explained that it is planning to hire external contractor(s) to conduct two studies. One study will be on the General Provisions of GFL and one on the functioning of RASFF and crisis management.

After the completion of the studies and after consultations with Member States and Stakeholders the Commission will produce a report which is expected in the first quarter of 2015.

The Commission stressed that this initiative is **an evaluation exercise and not a legislative review.** For the moment the Commission does not plan to revise any provision. **These studies will enable the Commission to assess whether a revision is needed and if so, which provisions would need to be reviewed.** As an outcome of this exercise, targeted changes to the existing legal framework established by the "General Food Law Regulation" or, possibly, to other pieces of Union food law could be foreseen. These could be possibly sketched out in a future Action Plan.

Member States made some general observations on the project and were requested to communicate their detailed comments on the Commission's working document in writing.