



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants
Unit G.4 Official controls

Minutes
Working Group
"Official Controls Regulation (EU 2017/625)"

Tuesday 9 April 2024, **15H00 – 17H30**
Hybrid meeting

Chair: Tim Gumbel, Deputy Head of Unit G4

WORKING GROUP

1	15:00-15:45	Updates on guidance on the Official Controls Regulation	<p>The Commission informed the Member States that the second version of the OCR guidance is at the final stage of the interservice consultation with the Legal Service. The amendments which resulted from internal consultation were presented, in comparison with the content discussed in previous OCR Working Groups. Several topics on the interpretation of the OCR that have been identified internally and through exchanges with colleagues from Member States, were presented as part of reflexions on a possible third amendment of the OCR guidance.</p> <p>A separate presentation was given on replies given by Unit G4 to questions on the OCR regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- mandatory fees and the scope of application of Articles 79(2)(c) and 83(1) OCR;- the stage of application of mandatory fees for fishery products;- the scopes of application of the Water Directive (EU) 2020/2184 and OCR as regards the official laboratories and methods used for official controls of bottled water. <p>The Commission also informed on questions it had received on National Reference Laboratories designated in different Member States and if the enforcement actions fall into the category of official controls or other official activities. The Commission will shortly inform Member States on its position on these issues.</p>
2	15:45-16:15	Exchange of views on the implementation of border checks on samples of food of animal origin for testing purposes	<p>The Commission informed about its exchanges with stakeholders on the implementation of border checks on samples of food of animal origin for testing purposes. During those exchanges, a number of elements (such as scope and limitation of the import permits issued by Member States, guarantees provided by laboratories to which the samples are destined) had been identified which could be further discussed with a view to a more harmonised approach to those border checks. The Commission asked Member</p>

			States for written feedback in relation to the elements discussed.
3	16:15– 16:45	Exchange of views on a draft Commission Implementing Regulation amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1014 on requirements for border control posts	<p>The Commission shared a first draft with Member States on the Regulation amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1014 on BCP requirements. A presentation was given on the changes proposed for Articles 3, 5 and 6 of this Regulation as well as the reasoning as provided in the draft recitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusion of high volume bulk goods of non-animal origin in the derogation for facilities of Art. 3(5); - inclusion of plants and plant products and other objects regulated by Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 in products that may undergo identity and physical checks in commercial storage facilities – Art. 3(11); - providing flexibility in the separation requirements for different animal species in the BCPs – Art. 5(1)(e); - including live frogs, live fish and live invertebrates not intended for human consumption in the derogation of commodities that can be inspected at BCPs designated for categories of goods referred to in Article 47(1)(b) of the OCR – Art. 6(5). <p>Suggestions from some Member States for further amendments were also presented and discussed.</p> <p>After a brief discussion, the Commission asked Member States to provide written comments on the draft.</p>
4	16:45– 17:30	Updates on official controls on e-commerce and on border checks for organic products	<p>Following the initiative of the Commission in the previous meeting to form a sub-group to the Working Group for discussions in relation to official controls of e-commerce, a first meeting of that sub-group was held on 6 February 2024 with those 14 Member States (+ NO) that had expressed interest to join these discussions. Several points in relation to e-commerce controls, such as the use of cover identities, access to financial information, cross-border cooperation in controls and enforcement, and due diligence obligations under the Digital Services Act were discussed in detail. Member States exchanged their experiences, challenges and best practices. The Commission intends to hold meetings of the sub-group 3 to 4 times per year; all Member States are welcome to join these discussions.</p> <p>The Commission provided updates on ongoing activities on border checks for organic products. Member States’ experts on OCR are encouraged to contact the competent authority responsible for organic controls to discuss the main issues identified for the import into the Union of organic products currently discussed during GREX meetings led by DG AGRI. The Commission asked to ensure that the lists of the border control posts are updated in relation to organic controls. The hyperlinks, where the updated BCPs lists are available at the national websites, are to be provided to the Commission in line with the procedure on designation of the BCPs.</p>