

Report from the International Conference on e-commerce of Food - Trends and Official Control, which took place from 24 to 26 June 2019 in Berlin.

Organised by: DG SANTE and the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection

EU Commission DG SANTE: Commissioner V. Andriukaitis, M. Valletta (CAB), [REDACTED] (CAB), [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

Background: The conference was the first European event dedicated specifically to the e-commerce of food and referring to the new Regulation on official controls and its implementation.

Speakers were selected from all the relevant actors of the e-food chain at global level: consumer organizations, the most relevant on-line Marketplaces (Amazon, Google, Facebook), MS and Third Countries competent authorities shared their experiences and gave their suggestions to improve the global conditions of the online market in terms of food safety and consumer protection.

Almost three hundred people among representatives from competent authorities in the MS and relevant stakeholders from EU and non-EU countries attended the conference.

Main programme:

Commissioner Andriukaitis and the German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture Ms Julia Klokner opened the conference. The opening was followed by a panel on the “Responsibility of market places” attended by the Commissioner, E-bay representative, representatives of the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture and one NGO.

The Romanian [REDACTED] [REDACTED] intervened as representative of the Presidency of the EU Council underlining in this context the great interest of the EU Member States to work together to further develop and implement the instruments of the Control Regulation.

The Commissioner welcome speech highlighted the actions that DG SANTE has implemented in order to improve the performance of official controls on eCommerce in the EU highlighting the challenges for the supervisory authorities and the responsibilities of e-traders and e-platforms.

The German minister Julia Klöckner highlighted the need of cooperation between the different actors and the willingness to share at EU level the experience developed in Germany to achieve more efficient controls at EU level.

Participants actively discussed the topics sharing experiences, good practices and ideas to face the rapidly growing phenomenon of e-commerce of food at global level and suggesting possible future initiatives to ensure the respect of food safety requirements as in traditional commercial activities.

Main outcomes of the conference and take home messages:

- A global problem require taking action at global level. The sharing of information on control activities at international level is very important and the conference was a good opportunity. A similar event should be organised in the future to strengthen the network.

- Responsibilities of the Marketplaces: the active monitoring of advertisements and the blocking of certain suspect offers is very important to support control activities. Information on these activities should be shared.
- The enforcement of the new EU Control Regulation will stimulate further cooperation at EU level and a steering to better coordinate its enforcement should be considered
- A further strengthening of consumer rights for the on-line market should be considered.
- Information exchange and cross-border cooperation with Third Countries is crucial in order to promote food safety worldwide. It should start with the sharing of best practices and information on the methodologies applied.
- The EU Commission should play a role to facilitate the coordination of the controls and the sharing of information between MS and to support training (BTSF).