



PRESS RELEASE

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Food operators call on the Commission and national authorities to recognise the private initiatives established to guarantee food integrity and authenticity in the food chain. Close cooperation amongst the authorities and food operators shall also continue and be strengthened to tackle food fraud. These recommendations to promote food integrity and authenticity in the food chain were endorsed by more than 100 participants during a high level conference organised by CELCAA, EURO COOP and UECBV and hosted by DG SANTE in Brussels on 24th June.

More than 100 participants from competent authorities, official laboratories, the European Commission, food businesses including trading companies and consumers' organisations, attended the high Level Conference on Food Authenticity and Integrity organised on 24th June 2016 by CELCAA-UECBV and Euro Coop under the patronage of DG SANTE. The representatives met and discussed how private operators and public authorities can cooperate to promote and guarantee food authenticity and integrity. This conference was organised as a follow-up to the 2012 Conference on 'managing the growing challenge of food crime' and of the 2014 Conference organised by the Italian Presidency on 'food fraud' with the aim to assess the progress made since 2012 including initiatives undertaken by food business operators.

Panel sessions included presentations on European policy actions targeting counterfeiting in the food chain; European and Member States' national policies and actions to promote food integrity; consumers' expectations, as well as presentations from technical experts. The informative sessions were concluded with three case studies, where food operators explained their internal process guaranteeing the food integrity and authenticity of their products.

The set of recommendations discussed at the conference mainly focus on the need for food operators to continue their private initiatives to promote food integrity and authenticity and to further share and promote best practice while the Commission and National authorities were invited to recognise private initiatives. Closer cooperation, coordination and information sharing with Member States and private operators should continue. Participants acknowledged that innovation on the part of food businesses can play a key role in putting in place laboratory techniques that will guarantee food authenticity and integrity. Recommendations also include that Member States and the European Commission should continue their efforts at reinforcing the implementation of the legislation, while strengthening sanctions when applicable.

Bernard Van Goethem, Director Directorate G, Crisis management in food, animals and plant at the Directorate General of SANTE, announced that "*the new Official Control Regulation negotiated between the three Institutions and endorsed by COREPER on 22nd June is a positive step. It will not only enable competent authorities to modernise and strengthen their controls against fraudulent practices (for example unannounced official controls; reinforced rules on administrative assistance and cooperation; reinforcement of rules on financial penalties) but the Commission will also be able to establish a new EU Reference center for food authenticity and integrity*".

Mr. Bongiovanni, Euro Coop's President states '*Today and in the future, technology in all its manifestations enables a better relationship among operators in the industry, between the distribution and its customers – in our sector, the consumer members. Many are the best practices that cooperatives have been putting in place throughout Europe on issues such as transparency, information, prevention and controls. These practices are*

necessary to increase the collective responsibility as a common good for our European citizens, for producers and distributors and to build quality barriers aimed at guaranteeing consumers safety instead of promoting a rather irrelevant protectionism’.

Jos Goebbels, Moderator of the conference and UECBV Vice-President stressed that “*Awareness of food operators to put internal systems in place to guarantee food integrity and authenticity is there and increasing. Together with an adapted communication explaining these procedures will guarantee trust of consumers in their products*”.

CELCAA is the EU umbrella association representing EU organisations covering the trade in cereals, grains, oils and fats, olive oil, agro-supply, animal feed, wine, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products, eggs and egg products, poultry and game, tobacco, sugar, nuts, fresh fruit and vegetables spices, general produces and cut flowers and plants. Members include CEEV, CIBC, COCERAL, EUCOLAIT, EUWEP, FETRATAB, GAFTA and SACAR (composed of ASSUC, FRUCOM, FRESHFEL and EUROPATAT) and UECBV.

EURO COOP is the voice of the co-operative retailers in Europe. Our associations brings together the national associations of consumer co-operatives in 19 European countries, which represent 4,500 local/regional co-operatives, employing 500,000 citizens across Europe, operating 36,000 stores, which serve 32 million consumer-members daily. Euro Coop’s members together are Europe’s strongest retail force – accounting for € 76 billion in annual turnover from sales.

UECBV is the mouthpiece of national federations representing livestock markets, livestock traders (cattle, horses, sheep, pigs), meat traders (beef, horse meat, sheep meat, pig meat), and the meat industry (slaughterhouses, cutting plants, meat preparation plants). UECBV counts 55 national or regional federations in 24 out of the 28 Member States of the European Union, but also in Morocco, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. In total, some 20,000 firms of all sizes and over 230,000 jobs are represented within the UECBV and its national and international federations.

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