



Press Release

Luxembourg, 6 February 2018

EU Auditors to examine food safety policy

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is conducting an audit of EU food safety policy. The auditors will examine whether the EU's food safety model is soundly based and, when put into practice, keeps food products consumed in the EU safe from chemical hazards. They have also published a background paper on EU food safety policy as a source of information for those interested in the subject.

Food safety may be put at risk by three types of hazards: physical, biological and chemical. The focus of the audit will be the control system for chemical hazards – poisonous substances that occur naturally or are added during food production or handling. Examples include cleaning agents, pesticides and certain metals. While there are checks to ensure that chemicals are lawfully used (e.g. pesticides in farming), residues may still affect later stages in the food supply chain.

“One of the main objectives of the EU is to keep the food we consume safe,” said Janusz Wojciechowski, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. “This audit should help consumers to better understand how the EU food safety model works and contribute to their confidence in EU food policy.”

The total ceiling for expenditure from the EU budget on “food and feed safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health” for the period 2014-2020 is €1.89 billion.

The auditors will interview staff at the European Commission and relevant EU agencies and consult food industry stakeholders. They will visit three Member States: the Netherlands, Italy (Liguria) and Slovenia. The audit report is expected to be published in late 2018.

This report will form part of a series by the ECA on various aspects of the food chain. The series also covers food waste (published in January 2017), animal welfare (currently underway) and organic food (also planned for 2018).

The purpose of this press release is to give the main messages of the background paper by the European Court of Auditors. The full paper is on www.eca.europa.eu.

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Notes to Editors

EU food safety policy takes an integrated approach and encompasses actions addressing the entire food chain, from animal feed, animal health, plant protection and food production to processing, storage, transport, import and export, as well as retail sales. It involves ensuring an effective control system, managing international relations with non-EU countries and international organisations and ensuring science-based risk management. The EU food safety model relies on a strong and effective monitoring and control system to provide a coherent farm-to-fork policy.