

ANNEX

NOTE TO ENTERPRISE EUROPEAN NETWORK PARTNERS

Subject: [SME Panel specific action] – evaluation of the General Food law

Dear Partners of the Enterprise European Network,

I wish to thank you for participating in this specific action and providing us with such a high number of replies. The results of this consultation constitute significant input which will feed into the evaluation of the General Food law which the Commission is currently preparing.

The information gathered by the network will be subject to detailed examination and will be analysed also in connection with a public consultation that the Directorate-General Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) of the Commission will launch on its website in the coming weeks, with a possibility to provide input until the end of October 2015.

In any case, I am pleased to share with you the results of our initial screening of the data received. In particular, the findings show that:

- The vast majority of respondents are well aware of the various basic legal requirements of the General Food law which are applicable to their activities (obligations regarding placing of safe food on the market, own checks and action to be taken in case of non-compliance with legal requirements).
- The majority of the respondents rarely or never find it hard to meet most of these legal requirements. However with respect to the specific requirement to carry out own checks, nearly half of the respondents find it difficult to meet this requirement.
- The most prevailing food safety requirements which respondents had to comply with in their contracts with their suppliers or customers were private standards, guidelines or codes of practice issued by sector associations and the communication of the results of own checks.
- For nearly half of the respondents, the one step back – one step forward traceability requirement goes beyond a normal book-keeping exercise. In the same context, a vast majority of respondents indicate clear benefits of the traceability system.
- Around 75% of the respondents have an internal traceability system within their own organisation. The same number has an internal system for withdrawing food while still under the operator's control, while less than half of those have never used this system.
- Costs for compliance with traceability, labelling, authorisation, registration and certification requirements are seen as the most important financial burden, followed by costs in relation to own checks and to compliance with private standards.
- Regarding the share of administrative costs spent on compliance with EU food and feed law, over a quarter of respondents rank them at 0-5% of total administrative

costs, one fifth around 5-10%, one tenth between 10-15% and another tenth rank them at 20% more (30% indicate that they do not know).

- 18% of respondents indicate that the benefits of EU food and feed law outweigh the costs, 24% that benefits break even with costs and for 32%, benefits do not outweigh costs (around 25% indicate that they do not know).

The results constitute very important data for the purposes of the evaluation of the General Food law of DG SANTE and I am extremely grateful to the network for this contribution to the work of the Commission.

I shall ensure that you are kept updated on the follow-up and our more detailed analyses.