



Food Fraud Network Activity Report 2015

Administrative Assistance and Cooperation and the Food Fraud Network

Where the outcome of official control on feed and food requires action in more than one Member State, competent authorities in the Member States concerned have to provide each other with administrative assistance. Administrative assistance may include, for instance, participation in on-the-spot controls that the competent authority of another Member State carries out.

In the wake of the horsemeat scandal of 2013, a pan-European mechanism to ensure the rapid exchange of information between national authorities and the Commission in cases of suspected fraudulent practices was set up. As a result, the **Food Fraud Network (FFN)** was born and tasked with handling requests for cross-border cooperation. Each Member State appointed a contact point to handle requests from contact points in the other Member States that are part of the Network.

This Network has been operational since July 2013, and since its creation, the Commission has observed a marked increase in the number of exchanges: from 30 in 2013 to more than 100 in 2015, adding up to over 200 cases in total since its creation.

The Administrative Assistance and Cooperation (AAC) system

A dedicated IT application, known as the **Administrative Assistance and Cooperation (AAC) system** was launched on the 18th of November 2015, to facilitate the exchange of administrative information between national authorities working to combat cross-border non-compliances in the food and feed chain in the EU. The system was mostly tested by Food Fraud Network during its development and is therefore used in this first phase by this Network. At a later stage, it will be made available also to the liaison bodies working on cases of Administrative Assistance and Cooperation not related to fraudulent practices.

Type of cases exchanged

In 2015, 108 cases were exchanged by the Food Fraud Network. Out of these, 12 were exchanged via the AAC system that was launched in November 2015.

As shown in the pie chart, alleged violations were mostly related to labelling non-compliance (notably with regard to ingredients mislabelling), suspicion of illegal exports, and prohibited treatments and/or processes applied to a certain foodstuff (e.g. addition of synthetic glycerol to wine).

The majority of exchanges that took place in the Network in 2015 concerned suspicion of illegal exports, followed by exchanges on fish and fish products. Importantly, however, statistical conclusions related to potential "food fraud" cases in Europe cannot be drawn from these data given that Member States may also exchange information outside of the FFN and that cases which do not have a cross-border dimension, i.e. which occur at purely national level, are not exchanged via the Network.

Cases exchanged by the FFN by type of alleged violation in 2015

