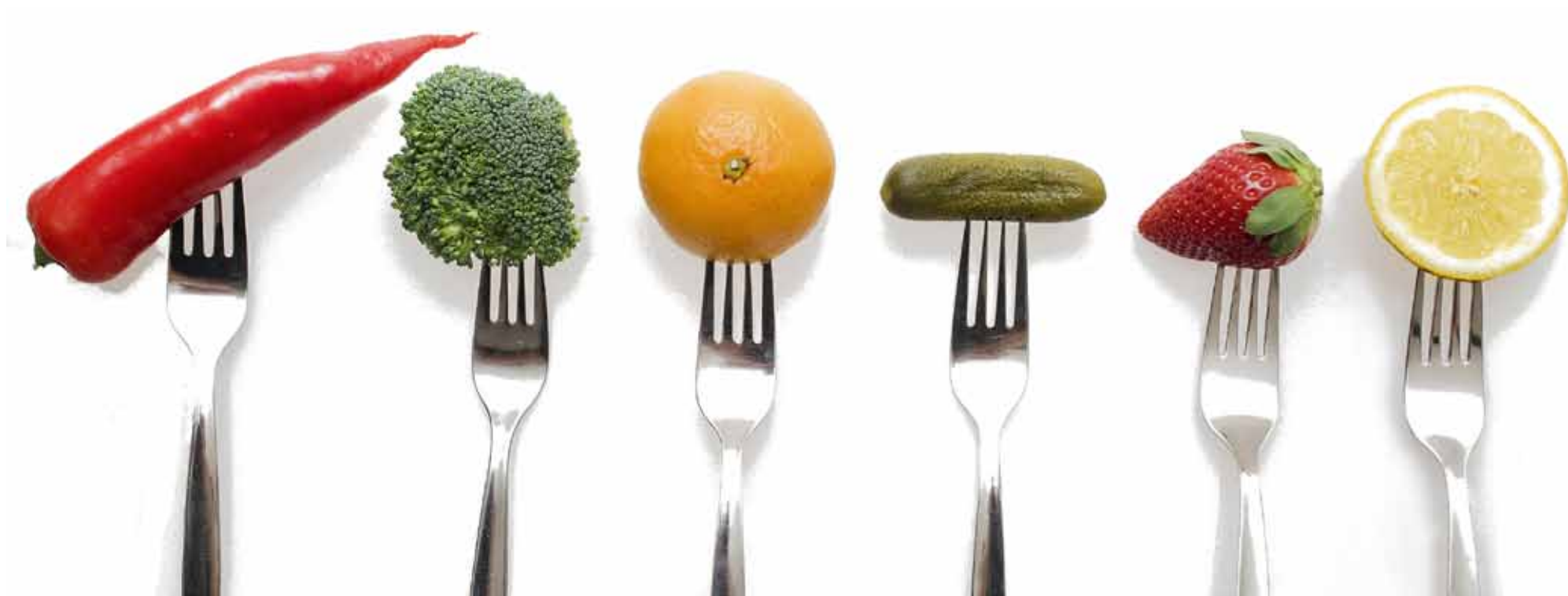




MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Food Safety and Nutrition Strategy for 2014 – 2020



2014

A large, solid orange graphic that resembles a leaf or a fan, positioned on the right side of the page. It has a curved top and bottom edge and a pointed left edge.

**Food Safety and Nutrition
Strategy for 2014 – 2020**



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Resolution of the Government of the CR

GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

No 25 of 8 January 2014

concerning the Food Safety and Nutrition Strategy for 2014 – 2020

The Government

I. **approves** the Food Safety and Nutrition Strategy for 2014 – 2020, included in Part III of the document Ref. No 1460/13 (hereinafter referred to as the “Strategy”), stating that the food safety and nutrition represent one of the priorities of the Government.

II. **imposes**

1. upon the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health
 - a) to ensure the implementation of food safety and nutrition policy in compliance with the Strategy,
 - b) to ensure the accomplishment of tasks laid down in the Strategy,
 - c) to submit to the Government
 - ca) before 31 December 2017 the information comprising ongoing evaluation of tasks laid down in the Strategy,
 - cb) before 31 December 2020 a follow-up strategic document,
2. upon the Ministers of Defence, Education, Youth and Sports, Industry and Trade, Environment, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government and the Minister of Interior, the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Government and the Minister of Finance and the Chairperson of the State Office for Nuclear Safety to cooperate with the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health in the coordination of food safety and nutrition related matters, to provide necessary information and synergy in the fulfilment of tasks ensuing from the Strategy, in particular.

To be implemented by:

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance,
 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior,
 Ministers of Agriculture, Health, Defence,
 Ministers of Environment, Industry and Trade,
 Minister of Education, Youth and Sports,
 Chairperson of the State Office for Nuclear Safety

Prime Minister
 Ing. Jiří Rusnok, m.p.

Introduction

Following the first decade of the 21st century, a fairly calm period with respect to food safety, the European Union, and thus also the Czech Republic, entered a turbulent period characterised by increased public and media interest in food safety and quality matters, namely due to numerous food scandals that hit the EU and the CR in the last two years. It is obvious that even though the food safety system in the EU is considered to be the most comprehensive in the world after the major food law revision in 2001, it continues to show deficiencies which allow for food scandals of international scope. For the competent authorities of the Member States, the CR inclusive, this confirms the fact that the food safety system shall be dynamic, flexible and responsive to the changing conditions.

In 2012, the so called methanol affair unfolded in the CR which despite having its roots in illegal production badly affected the economy of “legal” producers and distributors of alcoholic drinks. Most importantly, though, dozens of people died as a result of methanol poisoning and many others will suffer from lifelong consequences. Regarding the scope, it has been the worst ever food related emergency in the history of the Czech Republic. On the other hand, the cooperation among the competent authorities across the individual sectors has proven very efficient in addressing this emergency.

Despite the facts referred to above, the level of food safety in the CR can be considered very good and stable over a long period of time. It is repeatedly confirmed by results of official controls and monitoring of contaminants in food and also for instance by the numbers of foodborne diseases, including food poisoning reported to EPIDAT system. The outcomes of public opinion surveys conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2011 and 2012 indicate that this opinion on the Czech food is also shared by consumers.

The presented Food Safety and Nutrition Strategy for 2014 – 2020 (hereinafter referred to as the “Strategy”) is the key document of the CR in the field of food safety and nutrition, a follow-up to the previous strategic documents of 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2010. It was compiled jointly by the participating ministries, non-governmental and consumer organisations.

The document complies with the Strategy for Growth of Czech Agriculture and Food Sector, which perceives the increased stress on quality and safety of Czech food production to be one of the ways of enhancing the importance of food sector in the domestic market and boosting the growth of its export performance.

I. Objectives

I.1. Objectives of the CR in the field of Food Safety and Nutrition

The fundamental objectives of the CR in the field of food safety is to facilitate the production and marketing of only safe food, to provide verified information on food safety and quality, and thus to improve consumer protection and rightful interests of consumers.

The main objective of the CR in the field of nutrition is to promote healthy diet of the population, in high-risk groups of population in particular, through evidence-based health education and dissemination of information among consumers, producers and distributors conducive to preventing diseases, active strengthening of health and improving the quality of life.

I.2. Objective of the Document

The presented document aims to set the priorities of the CR in the field of food safety and nutrition for the period 2014 - 2020.

Moreover, this strategic document should also contribute to raising the public confidence in food safety system, in safety, quality and nutritional value of food.

2. Ensuring Food Safety and Nutrition Related Matters

The food safety system in the Czech Republic is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with other ministries and other state administration authorities, NGOs, professional and consumer associations and state as well as non-state research institutes, higher education institutions and universities. It has been developed ever since 2001, when in response to the White Paper on Food Safety and the related actions taken by the EC, the Resolution of the Government of the CR No 1320 concerning the Food Safety Strategy in the CR was adopted.

Healthy diet and corresponding nutrition policy of the state are the pivotal factors of primary prevention of diet-related non-communicable diseases. It consists in both the appropriate nutritional composition and promoting the production of safe and beneficial to health food.

Promotion of healthy diet and appropriate dietary habits in the population constitutes an integral part of policies related to agricultural and food production and also of policies focusing on health, disease prevention as well as education and motivation of the population and affordability of health promoting nutrition. Nutrition penetrates not only food safety matters, but also production, processing and availability of quality food in the domestic market. As such nutrition is a strategic objective of utmost importance, which is generally respected as the priority task of the EC (DG SANCO), WHO (Action Plan for Implementation of the European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2012 - 2016) as well as of the EFSA.

2.1. Scientifically-based Health Risk Assessment

Risk assessment means a science-based process, the aim of which is to provide a detailed description of the risk in order to be able to efficiently influence it. The process consists of the following four steps: hazard identification, hazard characterization, exposure assessment and risk assessment.

In the European Union, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was established in 2002 which provides the European Commission, European Parliament and the Member States with science-based information necessary for their activities and decision-making. In the CR, the risk assessment has for a long time been carried out by state as well as

non-state research institutes, higher education institutions and universities. To support the risk assessment in food chain the scientific committees have been set up.

Risk assessment is carried out based on the data obtained through regular long-term monitoring (e.g. monitoring programmes of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of the Environment), in special cases by research institutes, but provided certain conditions are met, also in the framework of routine controls throughout the chain, from primary production to food consumption. Of crucial importance is the collection of data directly from consumer groups through epidemiological studies. Primary data is also provided by professional institutions from across the Czech Republic, competent authorities performing official controls, higher education institutions and universities. The data is used for the purposes of health risk assessment in the CR and is also forwarded to the EFSA for risk assessment at the level of the European Union.

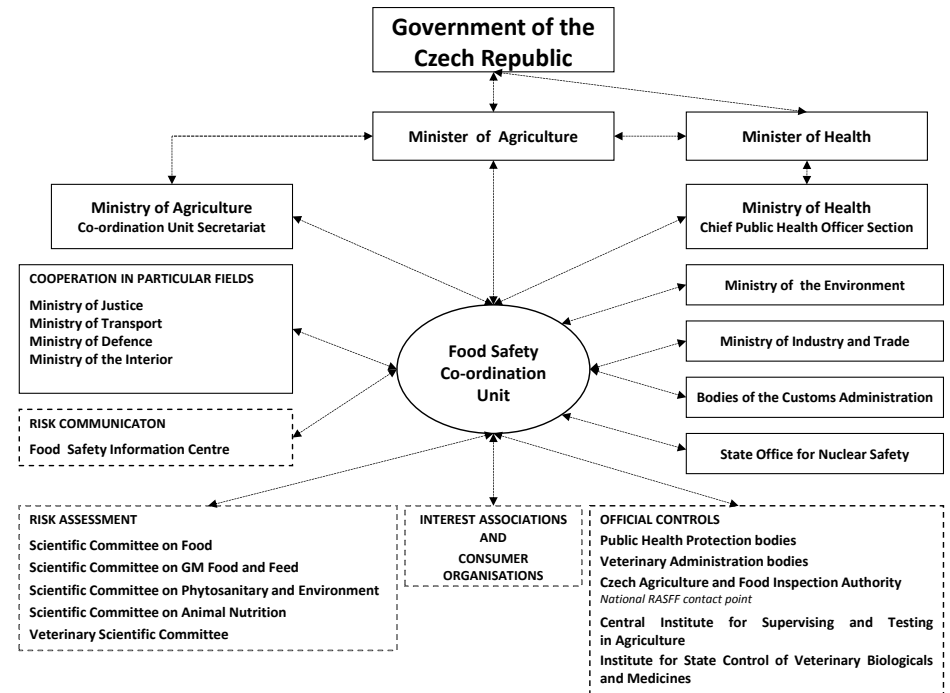
2.2. Risk Management

The coordination of activities of all the stakeholders from among governmental and non-governmental institutions has been entrusted to the interministerial Food Safety Co-ordination Unit (hereinafter referred to as the "Co-ordination Unit"), composed of the representatives of central state administration authorities, competent authorities performing official controls, consumer and professional organisations. The Co-ordination Unit has been tasked to coordinate activities of individual ministries and to set out priorities in the field of food safety, to reinforce collaboration with national food safety institutions of the EU Member States and EFSA, and to ensure the exchange of information among all the stakeholders.

Crucial role in the system of ensuring food safety in the CR is played by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and organisations reporting to them. Specific responsibilities of these ministries in the field of food safety are defined by Act on the establishment of ministries and other central state administration bodies (The Competence Act) and other laws (*Annex 1: Scope of authority of individual ministries in the field of food safety and nutrition*).

Drafting the laws and their application and the conduct of official controls are closely linked within the risk management process. Rights and obligations are stipulated by both the national and Union law, the final wording of which can be influenced by the CR, with account taken to the national interests, through its active participation in drafting the legislation. The food safety law is within the remit of several central state administration bodies, which therefore calls for intensive interministerial cooperation and collaboration with professional as well as consumer public.

Figure 1: Food safety system in the CR chart



Supervision of fulfilment of obligations ensuing from the Czech and Union law for food business operators across the food and feed chain from primary production to the consumer purchase is carried out by the competent authorities of the Ministry of Agriculture (State Veterinary Administration, Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture and the Institute for State Control of Veterinary Biologicals and Medicines) and the Ministry of Health (public health protection bodies). An important role in control over labelling of spirits pursuant to Act No 307/2013 Coll., on compulsory labelling of spirits, is played by the Czech Trade Inspection Authority. In justified cases involved in official controls is also the State Office for Nuclear Safety and the Bodies of the Customs Administration (*Annex 2: Scope of authority of competent authorities performing official controls*). Framework control activities are defined by Multi-annual National Control Plan of the CR and Multi-annual Control Plan for Pesticide Residues that are regularly updated. Particular control activities for the upcoming period defined beforehand, typically for a calendar year, are laid down by annual control plans that are regularly evaluated and their effectiveness is analysed.

The competent state administration authorities and competent authorities performing official controls responsible for supervision of food and feed, and the General Customs Directorate and the State Office for Nuclear Safety in the CR are involved in the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), the purpose of which is to facilitate swift exchange of information among its members (EC, EFSA and EU member States) on food, feed and materials and articles intended to come into contact with food contact materials that are on the EU single market and pose a health risk to people. (*Annex 3: Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed*)

Regular education of competent authorities' employees performing official controls is the obligation arising from the relevant legislation. Repeated training of inspectors is a necessary precondition for their professional fulfilment of obligations and consistent conduct of official controls. Training courses are available at regional, national and international level, particularly within the system of training courses organised by the European Commission – Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF).

Organisations involved in the system ensuring food safety are also responsible for updating and verifying the efficiency of contingency plans that specify procedures in cases of emergencies.

2.3. Communication and Education

Risk communication is an essential responsibility of all the partners involved in food safety. It consists of two main streams of actions: accurate and prompt provision of information to the public on topical food safety matters on the one hand and education of various groups of lay and professional public on the other hand.

Individual organisations share information with the public on results of their activities through press releases which are posted on the websites of these organisations and are available to all mass media, but also through media outputs and usually also in the form of annual reports. The same pieces of information are collected and published also by the Food Safety Information Centre (FSIC), which has been tasked to ensure communication with consumers.

Education of public interest groups in the field of food safety and most importantly nutrition is a necessary part of activities performed by all the involved ministries as well as partners from among non-governmental organisations and it constitutes one of the pivotal activities of the FSIC. Consistently supported have been activities directed at raising the awareness of hygiene and food handling, healthy diet as a component part of healthy lifestyle and prevention of non-communicable diseases among the general public,

namely in a traditional manner (health promoting projects, printing of information leaflets, popularizing lectures, articles in printed media, etc.), and also with the use of state-of-the-art electronic teaching instruments (e-learning).

2.4. Cooperation with the European Food Safety Authority

Since 2002 the European Food Safety Authority has been tasked to provide the EU bodies with independent scientific advice, scientific and technical support for legislative activities which have an impact on food and feed safety. During the last decade, the EFSA became a widely respected independent authority, with its authority built on the trust of European consumers and cooperating organisations in the quality of its work.

One of the most important areas for EFSA activities and further development is the development of cooperation with the EU Member States, their organisations and experts. The cooperation will continue to intensify with the proactive approach to identification and assessment of the emerging risks applied by the EFSA. Simultaneously, the EFSA faces new challenges and expectations associated e.g. with demographic and climate change as well as trade globalization.

With the view to support cooperation between the EFSA and the Member States, the EFSA Focal Point has been established in each Member State. The performance of its activities and the cooperation with the EFSA as such has been assigned to the Food Safety Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. Apart from safeguarding the cooperation and exchange of scientific information between EFSA and the CR, the Focal Point shall support the representative in EFSA Advisory Forum, promote the involvement of national experts and organisations in cooperation with EFSA, and make the mission and activity of EFSA more visible.

Dozens of experts and numerous organisations are now involved in cooperation with the EFSA in the CR. Individual experts can show their interest in cooperation with EFSA by their registration in EFSA Expert Database, or by becoming a candidate for a member of one of the scientific panels. Independent scientific organisations operating in the fields of EFSA activities can become members of the network of cooperating organisations pursuant to Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002¹. Only these organisations

¹ Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, stipulates that EFSA promotes the European networking of organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission, the aim of which is, in particular, to facilitate a scientific cooperation network by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Authority's mission.

can participate in investigation of EFSA grants in the field of risk assessment. EFSA also establishes ad-hoc networks of organisations to fulfil specific tasks. They are composed of the Member States organisations, but upon request of EFSA, also by organisations of non-EU countries. (*Annex 4: Organisations cooperating with EFSA pursuant to Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and the EFSA scientific network*)

2.5. Nutrition

Observing the principles of healthy diet is the fundamental prerequisite for maintaining good health and preventing the development of diseases arising from inadequate nutrition behaviour of the population. Currently, overweight and obesity, but in part of the population also malnutrition and multiple non-communicable diseases belong to the most serious diseases. These include inter alia cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, eating disorders in teenagers, tooth decay, osteoporosis and cancer. Together these diseases represent the most frequent cause of morbidity and mortality in the CR (just like throughout the European region). As such they represent much more serious social and especially economic burden than food safety matters.

Therefore, it is in the national interest to supply the population, food producers as well as processors with evidence-based information in order to secure appropriate nutrition both in terms of quantity and quality, while taking into account the cultural and historical traditions, social, environmental and inevitably also economic aspects (food production sustainability). Such information is usually disseminated in the form of dietary guidelines based on theoretical knowledge as well as results of epidemiological studies.

The dietary guidelines cover a broad area with a multitude of aspects. They are defined along three levels of scientific complexity and practical applicability. The basic numerical recommendations for individual nutrients, general recommendations including summary information intended for the general public, and finally the practical food based dietary guidelines intended for individuals (e.g. in the form of the so called food pyramid).

The adoption of optimal dietary guidelines requires the insight in a nutrition status and behaviour of population. A vital instrument in this respect is also the tables of food nutritional values. These should be available not only to experts, but also to the general public, thus facilitating self-control on the part of an individual.

The WHO European Health Report 2005 states that up to 80 % of cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes mellitus and up to 40 % of cancer are preventable through healthy diet, increased physical activity and abstention from smoking. Social and individual responsibilities have to come hand in hand, i.e. preference shall be given to a healthier

lifestyle. Under such conditions, motivation, knowledge and availability of healthier lifestyle choices are essential for individuals. Emphasis shall be put on creating environments that enable informed choices of food and healthy diet and on educating the population in the field of nutrition, with regard to protection of healthy diet in vulnerable groups of population².

² WHO. Regional Office for Europe. European health for all database (HFA-DB) [on-line database]. Copenhagen, 2005. Available from: <http://www.euro.who.int/hfadb>.

3. Background for Setting Priorities for the Next Period

A marked development has been seen in a number of areas linked to food safety matters since 2010, when the Food Safety and Nutrition Strategy for 2010 – 2013 was adopted. In a number of cases the development has been positive, in some cases, though, the situation has grown worse. The presented document responds to these trends – it describes the opportunities and also defines the bottlenecks which have to be eliminated.

3.1. Positive trends

The system of ensuring food safety has been functioning.

The system of ensuring food safety, based in line with the White Paper on Food Safety of the European Commission on risk analysis principle, has been developed in the CR ever since 2001. Until now a plethora of actions have been delivered which contribute to its proper functioning. An important role has been played by good cooperation between the relevant ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health in particular.

The Czech consumers give ever more preference to Czech food.

The results of the public opinion survey carried out in 2012 by the Public Opinion Research Centre revealed that the consumers consider the domestic food to be of higher quality than the food imported from abroad. Almost three quarters of the population (73 %) believe that food safety of Czech food is up to the standard. The same opinion about the imported food was expressed by two fifth of the respondents only (43 %). Roughly 71 % of population are convinced that the Czech food is quality food, whereas the evaluation of imported food is mostly negative (53 %). People are also aware of huge differences in food quality.

The interest of the public and media in food safety matters and nutritional quality of food with respect to its impact on health has become stronger.

The demand for topical, accurate and verified information has been consistently rising, including the interest of the public and media in the outcomes of official food controls. The above referred to survey suggests that almost 50 % of consumers avail of adequate information, while over 50 % of them declare the lack of information. The interest of media reflects the demand of the public for information on food, which is why ever more attention is paid to these matters. The public is also far more concerned with energy and nutrient composition of food, information on healthy diet and prevention

of non-communicable diseases of mass occurrence, mainly with prevention of obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

Some positive trends in food consumption were reported in the last decade.

Ranking among them is a slightly increasing consumption of cereals, fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products and on the contrary a decrease in the consumption of sugar and sweets and alcoholic drinks. A positive trend was seen in the growing share of food produced by organic or integrated production systems and in the increasing consumer demand for this food.

More stress has been put on child nutrition.

The WHO strategy for breastfeeding promotion has been implemented. There is legislation in place governing school meals, the operators of school catering establishments are obliged to observe the dietary standards and guidelines. A fairly high percentage of children continue to eat in school canteens (approx. 75 %).

Health education at elementary schools.

Health education has been incorporated in school curricula, namely both in the field of health promoting nutrition and healthy diet. In recent years, projects encouraging the consumption of fruits, milk and dairy products among the elementary school pupils have been successfully implemented at schools (School Fruit and School Milk Schemes).

Data collection system has been aligned.

Since 2011 the CR has been providing official data on the occurrence of chemical contaminants in food to EFSA, namely in the requested, comprehensive format. The data of competent authorities performing official controls or other organisations are in this format collected at a single point, where there are checked and forwarded to EFSA. The data are available to all the organisations taking part in their collection. The used format of data is, however, unfitting for presentation to the lay public, who is therefore informed through summary reports in which the data are interpreted.

3.2. Negative trends

Consumer deception and food adulteration has been on an increase.

In recent years the number of cases of food adulteration has been growing, whether in the form of replacing quality raw materials by lower quality raw materials or even by substitutes of substandard quality. The appropriate food labelling has also assumed importance since deliberate shortcomings in food labelling emerge, the purpose of which is to

conceal the presence of a certain component in food (often e.g. food additives, cheaper raw materials, smaller amount of the main raw material, etc.). This is caused mainly by pressure on food prices and partly also by demand of the public affected by the economic situation.

Control of online grocery sale is complicated.

We have been monitoring the changes in shopping behaviour of consumers, resulting in a rapid increase of online sales of food and materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, which are also offered by “brick and mortar” stores. The control of online sales of food and materials and articles intended to come into contact with food is a challenge, often due to the fact that the operators are hard to reach and the samples difficult to collect. Once the brick and mortar stores launch online sales and offer also “basic” food on-line, it will become necessary to control also this method of sale and delivery of goods, namely to the same scope as in brick and mortar stores.

Changes in agrotechnology have impacted the quality and safety of food.

An undesirable consequence of changes in farming practices (simplified crop rotation without soil improving crops, no-till farming system, etc.) is a more frequent mycotoxin occurrence in agricultural production. Food quality and safety are also adversely impacted by increased use of pesticides in agriculture, leading to more frequent findings of their residues.

New hazards and risk have emerged.

It is particularly due to the growing degree of globalisation, expansion of business and climate change that new hazards and risks have been identified which relate primarily to the spread of biological agents and pests and pathogens native to other climatic zones. New methods and technologies applied in food chain have been continuously developed, e.g. nanotechnologies, genetic engineering, animal cloning, which are subject to risk assessment not only in terms of potential impacts on human health, but also with respect to the environmental impacts. The gravest problem of today is the increasing resistance of pathogenic microorganisms to antimicrobics, caused inter alia also by their excessive use in farm animal husbandry.

Scientific risk assessment has for long been underfinanced.

The importance of scientific risk assessment in the system of ensuring food safety does not reflect its current position and requirements of the public. A clear distinction has to be made between the full and rapid risk assessment. The conduct of rapid risk assessment is fairly good, while there is a lack of funds to finance activities supporting the full risk assessment. Even though the CR mostly takes over the full risk assessment conducted at the international level (EFSA, WHO, FAO), it can never take over those parts concerning

exposure assessment and hazard characterization, which are country-specific. In recent years, the CR has been lagging behind some of the EU Member States. In this respect, apart from underfinancing of risk assessment, it is also necessary to refer to the manner and scope of requirements, which necessitates high level of expertise.

Topical data on food composition are still missing.

There is no relevant database of food composition in the CR. Absence of these data considerably limits the fulfilment of requirements for nutrition information on food labels which can indirectly affect also the potential forms of communication on nutritional benefits of food placed on the Czech market.

Data on individual food consumption are unavailable.

There is a basis for systematic monitoring of food consumption in the CR – the Individual Food Consumption Survey – IFCS 2004, financed by the MoH, in keeping with the Resolution of the Government of the CR No 1320 of 10 December 2001 concerning the Strategy to Ensure Food Safety in the Czech Republic. Currently, neither the updated data on individual food consumption in the Czech population, nor the up-to-date tables of food nutritional values are available. The absence of these data impedes the targeted communication with the public on nutrition and is also a limiting factor for an unbiased risk assessment.

Reluctant approach to the application of biotechnologies.

Novel technologies that can have a major influence on food production are applied in agriculture as well as food industry worldwide. It concerns primarily the use of genetic modification and animal cloning techniques. GMOs have been used in food and feed industries ever since late 1980s and even though no findings of negative effects on health have been identified, their use continues to be questioned. Another widely discussed technology is animal cloning for the purposes of food production that is strongly rejected by the public. Its application in practice is also hindered by the extremely high costs.

Growing number of overweight or obese persons, children in particular.

The weight of a half of the adult population in the CR is higher than normal and no success has been reached in reducing this proportion. The number of obese people has been on a steady increase since the beginning of 1990s. Obesity-related diseases constitute the second most frequent cause of death among preventable diseases, right after smoking-related illnesses. Also the share of obese or overweight children has been growing, the weight of 1 in 5 boys is higher than normal. Even though it is well known that excessive weight in childhood increases the risk of overweight in adulthood. This trend results not only in an increased number of health complications, but also in a large number of both

direct and indirect economic consequences. The total health care costs of obesity, comorbidities inclusive, are estimated at more than 12 % of the total costs of health care system.

Decrease of energy expenditure on account of physical passivity results in higher requirements on food nutrition content.

The state-of-the-art technologies (computers, Internet) are conducive to increased physical passivity of children whose physical fitness deteriorates and is conducive to lower energy expenditure and necessity to achieve an optimal positive balance by choosing nutritionally complete and low-calorie food.

Assortment of food in school vending machines and school snack bars fosters bad eating habits.

Assortment of food and meals, offered to children and youth, offered in vending machines and school snack bars of all types of schools, does not meet proper nutrition and healthy diet principles. They offer predominantly oversalted, fatty meals, sweets, pastries with unhealthy fillings and sweetened beverages. The assortment of food and meals is not regulated, contrary to many other European countries.

3.3. Legislation

Draft amendment to Act No 110/1997 Coll., on Foodstuffs and Tobacco Products and on Amendments to Some Related Acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act on Foodstuffs") is carried forward through the legislative process. The main reason behind the proposed amendment is to ensure the adaptation of the directly applicable EU legislation which to a major degree replaces the previous food law directives. The aim is to harmonise the Act on Foodstuffs with the EU legislation and to ensure the compliance of implementation and consistency of the Act on Foodstuffs with the Union legislation and also to conduct transposition and adaptation of the relevant provisions of EU food law into the national legal order. It consists in the implementation of requirements laid down by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, by Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers, and by other EU regulations in the field of food additives, flavourings, enzymes, etc., and also by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs and Regulation (EC)

No 1924/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on nutrition and health claims made on foods. The objectives of food law in the field of provision of food information to consumers are also fulfilled by adoption of national measures requiring the declaration of some or all the particulars on non-prepacked foods pursuant to Articles 9 and 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 shall be applied from 13 December 2014 and the provisions on nutrition declaration shall be applied from 13 December 2016. During this period the implementing acts of the European Commission will be adopted, e.g. to declare the country of origin. Adoption of these legal acts is preconditioned by ensuring and guaranteeing the consumer right to information so that the consumer could make an informed choice in relation to food he consumes. It is also instrumental in achieving a high level of consumer health protection and preventing any practices that might mislead the consumer.

The revision of the implementing regulations to the Act on Foodstuffs aims to simplify and clarify the legislative framework, with an emphasis put on strengthening the consumer protection and production of quality food products.

A number of proposals for regulations, newly stipulating some areas of food law, are currently discussed by working groups of the EU bodies. One of the crucial drafts is the proposal for a Regulation on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health, plant reproductive material, plant protection products. This proposal for a regulation is a follow-up to the performed revision of the existing Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls. The new regulation will have a major impact on entire agri-food chain. The proposal for the regulation is a component part of the package of measures comprising the proposal for a regulation on animal health, on protective measures against pests on plants and on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material.

The proposal for a Regulation on official controls and other official activities aims to simplify and clarify the legislative framework for the organisation of official controls along the entire agri-food chain, to align the principles of official controls, to set out the requirements for the performance of "other official activities", to ensure that adequate financial resources are always available to perform official controls, including transparency and reducing the burden on operators.

Another food law area which will see major changes is the category of "food for particular nutritional uses", which under the new regulation will have been cancelled by 2016 and replaced by explicitly defined categories of food. The delegated acts to the framework regulation laying down the requirements on individual categories of food will be adopted.

Apart from preparation of legislation, work is also under way on drawing up multiple non-legislative documents such as recommendations for practical application of some legal provisions with the aim to facilitate their application in practice and performance of official controls, to develop various databases that would increase the transparency for the public. Elaboration of these documents is considered to be of major importance and participation in these activities in the future is essential.

4. Priorities for the period 2014 – 2020

Tasks and priorities defined in the previous strategic documents in the field of food safety and nutrition are largely of a long-term nature. The Food Safety and Nutrition Strategy for 2014 – 2020 builds on the earlier described tasks and priorities and at the same time describes a multitude of new tasks and priorities responding to the current needs and situation.

4.1. Priorities in the field of food safety

4.1.1 Risk assessment

- To promote activities of institutions with health risk assessment within their remit (responsibility of the MoA, MoH);
- To ensure financing for monitoring of contaminants in food chain to the scope facilitating the drafting of a national policy in the field of management of data from control and monitoring activities performed by the competent authorities performing official controls (responsibility of the MoA, MoH);
- To create a national database with data for health risk assessment facilitating on-line access to data both to data providers and in the appropriate format to lay public, compatible with the EFSA system, including the application of a suitable software for data processing (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To relaunch full activities of the Scientific Committee on Food, to provide financing for activities of the scientific committees of the MoA, and to reinforce the involvement of expert units of stakeholder organisations in their activities (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To enhance the awareness of risk assessment methods among experts (responsibility of the MoH, MoA).

4.1.2 Risk management

- To further enhance effectiveness of activities performed by the Food Safety Co-ordination Unit and thus to strengthen its function of a platform for exchange of accurate and reliable information among the ministries/state institutions (responsibility of the FSCU);

- To foster the role of the Food Authority of the Ministry of Agriculture in the field of methodological management of activities of ministerial competent authorities performing official control (Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority, State Veterinary Administration, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture) over the food chain, including feed and pesticides; this step envisages more intensive activity of the Executive Committee of Competent Authorities, extension of the scope of its activities and enhancing coordination of the conduct of supervision over food and feed market (responsibility of the MoA);
- To reinforce the process of proposing, adopting and implementing effective measures to increase competitiveness of food industry and to underline food quality (responsibility of the MoA);
- To optimise the network of laboratories based on the conducted need analysis (responsibility of the MoA);
- To take an active part in drafting and preparing the EU legislation and in commenting thereon (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To regularly update the multi-annual control plans (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To intensify the attention paid by the competent authorities performing official controls to on-line sale of food and food contact materials, the share of which continues to grow (responsibility of the MoA, MoH);
- To actively fight against consumer deception in the field of labelling and adulteration of food, feed and pesticides (responsibility of competent authorities performing official controls);
- To intensify cooperation with producers and distributors of food contact materials (responsibility of the MoH);
- To safeguard rapid exchange of primary data necessary for health risk assessment among the competent authorities performing official controls and institutions responsible for health risk assessment (responsibility of the MoH, MoA, MoE and competent authorities performing official controls);
- To set out transparent rules for allocating capacity in BTSF training courses to the individual competent authorities performing official controls (responsibility of the MoA);
- To simplify the implementing regulations to the Act on Foodstuffs (responsibility of the MoA).

4.1.3 Communication and education

- To develop effective and open communication with the public on food safety (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To combine the web presentations of organisations under the Ministry of Agriculture dealing with food into one in order to increase effectiveness of communication with the public, including the publication of results of official controls (responsibility of the MoA);
- To effectively use social networks and state-of-the-art means of communication when communicating with consumers (responsibility of the FSIC);
- To further educate consumers in matters related to hygiene and food handling, labelling and quality of food (responsibility of the MoH, MoA, competent authorities performing official controls);
- To align activities of the Food Safety Information Centre under the Ministry of Agriculture by transferring some of the activities of FSIC carried out by the IAEI (responsibility of the MoA, IAEI);
- To encourage involvement of employees of competent authorities performing official controls in the BTSF training initiative and to deliver training activities at the national level (responsibility of the MoH, MoA, competent authorities performing official controls);
- To promote quality Czech products by dissemination of information, both within the already established activities (KLASA, Regional Food, Farmers Festivals) and through another support to quality domestic production (responsibility of the MoA);
- To encourage discussion on the danger of antimicrobial resistance and importance of adoption of measures to reduce its spread (responsibility of the MoH, MoA, NIPH, SVA);
- To foster further involvement of non-governmental organisations in the process of communication with the consumers and their education in the field of food safety (responsibility of the MoA, MoH).

4.1.4 Cooperation with the EFSA

- To further develop activities of the EFSA Focal Point in line with the EFSA requirements (responsibility of the MoA);
- To encourage the involvement of national experts and institutions performing risk assessment in the cooperation with the EFSA, e.g. through the inclusion in the Expert

Database, participation in working meetings, cooperation pursuant to Article 36, etc. (responsibility of the MoA);

- To take an active part in the development and use of the EFSA Information Exchange Platform by sharing risk assessment results and other relevant information and by making the IEP accessible to the Czech experts (responsibility of the MoA);
- To provide professional and technical assistance to experts and organisations involved in cooperation with the EFSA (responsibility of the MoA);
- To develop networks of cooperating experts and organisations at the national level (responsibility of the MoA);
- To publicize the EFSA, to enhance the awareness of its activities among the Czech public (responsibility of the MoA);
- To cooperate in the development and national implementation of food consumption monitoring methods, in the collection of laboratory data and evaluation of dietary exposure as a contribution to the developing pan-European health risk assessment (responsibility of the MoH).

4.2 Priorities in the field of nutrition

4.2.1 Health risk assessment

- To ensure gradual implementation of the national strategy implementing the Health 2020 policy framework in the CR in areas related to nutrition and eating habits of the population (responsibility of the MoH in cooperation with other ministries);
- To better target and increase the effectiveness of public health promotion and disease prevention, including health education promoting healthy eating of the population and selected vulnerable groups of the population (responsibility of the MoH);
- To analyse the nutrition status of the Czech population, with regard to the state of health of the population (responsibility of the MoH);
- To promote the system of data collection on food consumption in the Czech population and to safeguard its long-term functioning (responsibility of the MoH);
- To ensure the elaboration and maintenance of publicly accessible tables of food nutritional values necessary for consistent evaluation of epidemiological data on food consumption and their use by other social groups, including food producers and consumers (responsibility of the MoA);

- To put in place the system for collection of data on nutrition, overweight and obesity and the system of monitoring the growth and development of children and youth (responsibility of the MoH);
- To ensure dietary exposure monitoring and biological monitoring (biomarkers) as a necessary indicator for the intake of selected nutrients and xenobiotics from food and environment as the basis for scientific risk assessment and management and follow-up measures and recommendations for the protection of public health of the population (responsibility of the MoH).

4.2.2 Risk management

- To regularly update the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG) for the whole population of the CR (responsibility of the MoH);
- In line with the EFSA and WHO to adapt the dietary reference values (DRV) and to implement them in the CR (responsibility of the MoH);
- To control and evaluate the accomplishment of dietary guidelines and standards for school catering (responsibility of the MoEYS, MoH);
- To establish the Nutrition Co-ordination Unit, the main task of which will be to coordinate activities of respective ministries and involved governmental and non-governmental institutions within their remit (responsibility of the MoH);
- To adopt, implement and evaluate the National action plan for healthy diet and nutrition and to coordinate activities focused on overweight and obesity prevention in the context of national implementation of the Health 2020 policy framework (responsibility of the MoH);
- In synergy with the EC to continue to promote the “School Fruit Scheme” by distributing locally grown fruits and vegetables to elementary school pupils (responsibility of the MoA);
- To propose measures to limit alcohol-induced damage (responsibility of the MoH in cooperation with other ministries);
- To propose measures to regulate the functioning of nutrition advice centres and similar establishments (responsibility of the MoH).

4.2.3 Communication and education

- To promote healthy eating habits in the population of the CR, responsible eating behaviour and to raise health literacy with the view to reduce the overweight and

obesity and associated non-communicable diseases (responsibility of the MoH, MoEYS, FSIC);

- To more deeply incorporate the nutrition and eating related matters, including prevention of non-communicable diseases and health promotion and protection, in education and training of children and youth at schools by supplementing the respective framework educational programmes during their revisions (responsibility of the MoEYS, MoH, MoA);
- To focus the selected thematic aid schemes on healthy diet, proper nutrition and healthy eating habits, to grant financial support to projects on these topics (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To set out measurable objectives with respect to eating habits of the population through a better informed consumer and better affordability (economic) and availability (physical presence in the market) of healthier food for the sake of protection of health against non-communicable diseases (responsibility of the MoH, Nutrition Co-ordination Unit, Government);
- To up-scale activities aimed to reduce the alcohol-induced damage (responsibility of the MoH in cooperation with other ministries);
- To develop activities focused on promotion of proper fluid intake (responsibility of the MoH);
- To promote awareness of a suitable range of food offered in school vending machines, snack bars and stores, including prospective protection of children against the offer of high-risk food and beverages (responsibility of the MoEYS, MoH);
- To promote awareness of potential food reformulation in order to reduce the content of hazardous nutrients with respect to the development of non-communicable diseases (responsibility of the MoH);
- To promote awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding for a healthy development of children, including the prevention of risk factors of non-communicable diseases (responsibility of the MoH);
- To communicate and cooperate in developing new technologies, formulas and recipes of food so that they better match the current requirements for quality of diet and nutrition (responsibility of the MoA, MoH);
- To improve vocational training and education of persons active in food industry, including the staff in healthy eating advice centres and similar establishments in the field of health protection and promotion, including healthy diet and eating habits and epidemiological principles (responsibility of the MoH, MoA);
- To include in pre- and postgraduate education of healthcare professionals the topics of nutrition and diet to a much broader scope, including the prevention of diet-related diseases (responsibility of the MoH, MoEYS in the field of postgraduate education);
- To promote the development of vocational training of employees of all the organisations involved in public health protection and promotion in the field of nutrition and prevention of overweight and associated diseases (responsibility of the MoH, MoEYS);
- To engage non-governmental organisations in the process of creation and dissemination of information in the field of dietary guidelines (responsibility of the FSCU).

5. Annexes

Annex 1: Scope of authority of individual ministries in the field of food safety and nutrition

Ministry of Agriculture is responsible particularly for veterinary and phytosanitary matters, animal nutrition and welfare and processes related to food and feed production and labelling, matters concerning the placing on the market of genetically modified food and feed. It also addresses the safety issues related to inputs in production, storage, distribution and use of food and feed. Moreover, it is responsible for animal protection, which covers also handling the animals, namely in terms of their treatment, feeding and watering, environmental hygiene, stirpiculture, breeding and reproduction, use, transport, veterinary treatment, control of epizootic diseases and animal killing. Through the intermediary of competent authorities it performs official controls of the market in the above referred to areas.

Ministry of Health is responsible for the area of catering services and articles and materials intended to come into contact with food. Moreover, in relation to food production and consumption it is responsible for setting out the microbiological criteria for food, food and feed additives, processing aids and flavourings, contaminants, residues of pesticides and veterinary medicinal products in food and conditions for food irradiation. It is the national competent authority in the field of food supplements, novel food, food for particular nutritional uses and health claims in food labelling. It identifies the causes of risks or damage to human health, namely also in the field of food production and its placing on the market. Through the competent authorities it performs control activities of the market and services in the above referred to areas.

Moreover, through its directly managed organisations the ministry ensures the implementation of health protection and promotion programmes, including prevention of diseases and health risks, health education and provision of advisory or other services in this field, including the monitoring of trends in disease incidence in relation to nutrition and eating habits. It also carries out monitoring, analysis and evaluation of indicators of the health status of the population.

The Ministry of Health coordinates the national actions on prevention of obesity and overweight and other non-communicable diseases. It is also within its remit to encourage the research to focus on obtaining the best practices for effective interventions in

the field of nutrition and evaluation of its benefits for health. It also supports research through intervention programmes aimed at prevention of non-communicable diseases and addressing the key factors that influence the consumer behaviour in selection of food and their relation to social-economic standing, and search for the most effective means of intervention.

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports stipulates the content of health education and training at schools. Health education is included in framework educational programmes of nursery schools, elementary schools and secondary schools. The ministry also supports school catering.

Ministry of the Environment is responsible for managing the single information system on the environment, including the national environmental monitoring in the territory of the Czech Republic, for drafting and amending legislation concerning hazardous chemical substances and mixtures, and for management associated with handling the genetically modified organisms.

Ministry of Industry and Trade develops and operates the consumer protection system.

State Office for Nuclear Safety is responsible for setting out the maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs and it manages the monitoring and evaluation of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs in the framework of the national radiation monitoring network activities, it provides expert guidance for other forms of monitoring and evaluation of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs.

Customs Administration bodies, authorised to conduct customs checks, carry out controls of imports of selected food and feed products together with the competent authorities performing official controls.

Annex 2: Scope of authority of competent authorities performing official controls

Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority performs state supervision of the production of food and its placing on the market, unless this supervision is performed by veterinary administration bodies, of reporting stocks, at the point of entry of food and raw materials of plant origin from the third countries in the CR.

State Veterinary Administration performs pre-slaughter veterinary inspection of slaughter animals and post-mortem veterinary inspection of carcasses and internal organs, state supervision of the production, storage, transport, import and export of raw

materials and food of animal origin, when raw materials and food of animal origin are offered for sale in market halls and market places, when food of animal origin is offered for sale in stores and store sections, where meat, milk, fish, poultry, eggs are processed or game meat is offered for sale, and in grocery stores provided they are the place of destination of raw materials and food of animal origin coming from the EU Member States.

Public health protection authorities perform state supervision of catering services and for the sake of identifying the causes of damage or risk to health and to prevent the spread of foodborne diseases or other foodborne damage to health. During these activities the authorities also use information obtained through continuous mapping of epidemiological situation and population health status monitoring. They are also responsible for the control of materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture performs state supervision of inputs to agricultural production, particularly official controls of the circulation of fertilisers, feeds, pesticides, seeds and varieties of grown plants, supervision of organic and integrated production systems, soil monitoring, including the residues of hazardous elements and substances, pesticide residues and plant health.

Institute of State Control of Veterinary Biologicals and Medicines performs controls of the use of medicinal products in the provision of veterinary care, including the related areas, of the use of prohibited substances and the rules governing the production and placing on the market of medicated feed.

Annex 3: Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

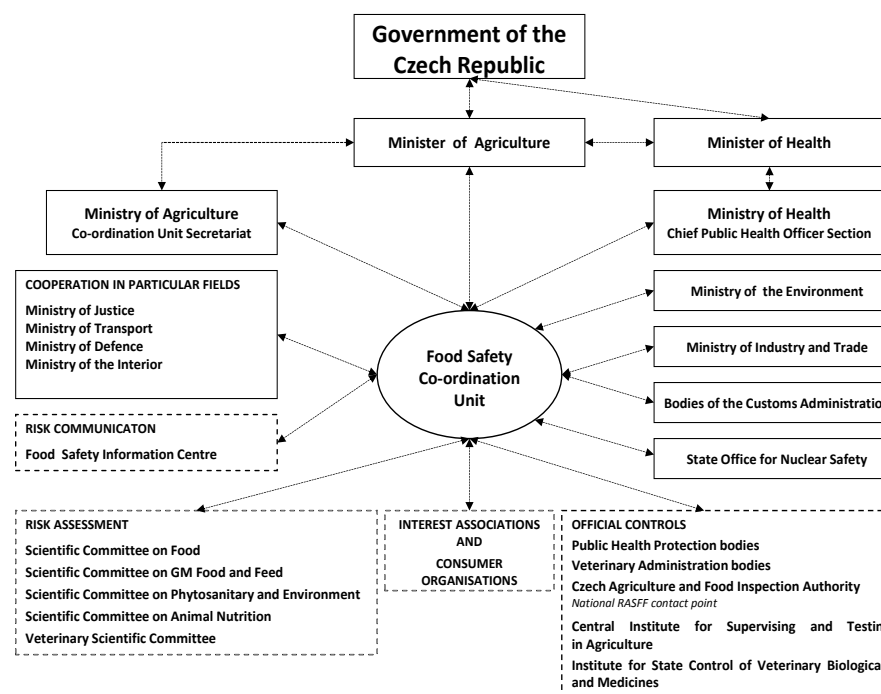
The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed has been put in place for the purpose of sharing information on direct or indirect risks to human and animal health and the environment deriving from food and feed. Notifications transmitted under the RASFF shall first and foremost prevent the placing on the market of dangerous food and feed, or withdraw or recall such food and feed from the EU single market.

RASFF has been established as a network, whose members apart from the European Commission are also the EU Member States, the European Free Trade Association Member States (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland) and from 2002 also the EFSA.

In the individual Member States, the European Commission communicates with the so called National Contact Points (NCP). The NCP in the Czech Republic has been set up at the Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority. The NCP in the Czech Republic also

communicates with the members of the network, or their contact persons. The coordination of RASFF in the Czech Republic is ensured by the MoA, namely by the Secretariat to the Food Safety Co-ordination Unit, in collaboration with the MoH. The relevant information is collected and published by the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information.

Figure 2: RASFF chart



Annex 4: Organisations cooperating with the EFSA pursuant to Article 36 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and the EFSA scientific network

a) Organisations cooperating with the EFSA pursuant to Article 36 (as of 1 November 2013)

1. National Institute of Public Health
2. Veterinary Research Institute
3. Crop Research Institute
4. Institute of Animal Science Prague
5. Food Research Institute Prague
6. Biology Centre of the ASCR
7. Mendel University in Brno
8. Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
9. Institute of Chemical Technology Prague
10. University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno

b) EFSA Scientific networks (as of 1 December 2013)

Scope	Name of the network	Organisations representing the CR
Animal health and welfare	Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Animal Health and Welfare	Veterinary Research Institute/ Veterinary Scientific Committee
Biological hazards	Scientific Network for Microbiological Risk Assessment Scientific Network on BSE-TSE	National Institute of Public Health State Veterinary Institute Jihlava
Data collection	Chemical Occurrence Expert Group Food Consumption Data Expert Group	National Institute of Public Health
Emerging risks	Emerging Risks Exchange Network	Ministry of Agriculture
GMO	Scientific Network for Risk Assessment of GMOs (Environmental Risk Assessment)	Ministry of the Environment
	Scientific Network for Risk Assessment of GMOs (Food and Feed)	Ministry of Agriculture
Plant health	Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Plant Health	Crop Research Institute / Scientific Committee on Phytosanitary and Environment
Plant protection products	Networking Group on Pesticide Monitoring Pesticide Steering Committee	Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture
Nanotechnologies	Scientific Network for Risk Assessment of Nanotechnologies in Food and Feed	National Institute of Public Health + Technology Centre The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
Zoonoses	Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection	State Veterinary Administration

List of Abbreviations

BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy	GMO	Genetically modified organism
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food (EC training initiative)	HEI	Higher education institution
CAFIA	Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority	IAEI	Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information
CISTA	Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture	IFCS	Individual food consumption survey
CR	Czech Republic	MIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
DG SANCO	Directorate General Health and Consumers of the EC	MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
DRV	Dietary Reference Values	MoE	Ministry of the Environment
EC	European Commission	MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
EC	European Community	MoH	Ministry of Health
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority	NCP	National Contact Point
EP	European Parliament	NIPH	National Institute of Public Health
EPIDAT	Information system for reporting infectious diseases	NS	Nursery school
ES	Elementary school	PRI	Public research institution
EU	European Union	RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN	SS	Secondary school
FBDG	Food-Based Dietary Guidelines	SVA	State Veterinary Administration
FCM	Food contact materials	TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy
FSCU	Food Safety Co-ordination Unit	UN	United Nations
FSIC	Food Safety Information Centre	WHO	World Health Organisation
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office		
GDC	General Directorate of Customs		

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