



"How Co-ops meet the challenge of  
guaranteeing safe foods"  
The European Union and Food Safety

by

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The European Community of Consumer Cooperatives represents

- 3200 consumer cooperatives
- 20 million European consumers

at EU level to promote, defend, and represent consumer co-operative interests by addressing the Commission and numerous committees, the parliament as well as other consumer organisations, NGOs and interest groups.



Euro Coop represents consumer co-operatives at European level with the objective to:

- inform on developments in policy areas of interest to its members,
- promote, defend, and represent consumers as well as consumer co-operative interests at EU-level,
- represent members at EU level,

and to constitute a forum for regular exchange of information and to coordinate common co-operative interests.



Euro Coop has four working groups to assist the secretariat in Brussels:

- Food Policy group
- Environmental policy
- Social reporting
- Co-operative developments and legislation

Experts from the members assist and represent Euro Coop in numerous advisory and consultative EU committees.

## The EU Commission addresses Food Safety

- White paper on food safety  
Jan. 2000 - COM(2000)719
- General principles for a food law  
Nov. 2000 – COM(2000)716

Food safety is the top priority throughout the entire food chain from cradle-to-grave.

Future regulations must be improved and simplified, more precise, more transparent, and more coherent.

## Issues addressed by the Commission:

- Establish The European Food Authority
- Improve the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX)
- Include more specific regulations on animal feed
- Improve animal health (zoonoses) and integrate animal welfare measures in food laws
- Improve regulations on functional and novel foods and feeds
- Promote new hygiene measures based on HACCP
- To complete regulations on pollutants (pesticides etc.)
- Revise and improve regulations on additives and aromatics
- Harmonize and standardise food controls throughout Europe
- Expand consumer information and improve labelling provisions

More than 80 new initiatives are announced for 2001-2002



The strength of Euro Coop is that its members are more than consumers.

They are consumer cooperatives running a professional retail business in each country.

The possibilities of Euro Coop at EU level to make an influence at EU level reflect this fact.



## Case: Irradiation

A consultation paper from EU proposes to complete (i.e. expand) the positive list of foodstuffs authorised for irradiation.

Euro Coop did not agree and was very critical of the Commission's Strategy. Irradiation should only be granted on a product-by-product basis.

The consultation paper was dated 27th Sept. 2000  
Euro Coop's comments were given on 30th Oct 2000

## Case: Irradiation

Euro Coop's position on the use of irradiation:

- Irradiation shall in no way be used as a substitute for hygiene or health practices or good manufacturing or agricultural practices.
- Irradiation is the ultimate need, if other methods of preservation demonstrably fail to ensure the provision of safe products.
- Irradiation should only be used, if there is a significant benefit to consumers.
- Irradiation shall only be authorised for foodstuffs representing a low contribution to food intake.



Based on consultations with the member co-ops and in particular with the working groups who meet on a regular basis, Euro Coop issues position papers, comments, reports, and memos.

The secretariat addresses the Commission to promote the coordinated views of the members in numerous committees throughout the year.



I strongly believe that Euro Coop does make an impact on the EU legislation because:

- It is a coordinated approach on behalf of the member co-ops.
- The member co-ops are professional retailers with an obligation to combine consumer ideals and the practical implementations for the benefit of the consumers.