



EXPERT REPORT
DEA
EXPERT MISSION ON GEORGIA

REF: AGR IND/EXP 63660

DATE: 16-20 JANUARY 2017

PLACE: TBILISI

- Please complete this report in **detail and return it electronically to:** Raili.PALL@ec.europa.eu within 2 weeks of the completion of your mission.

Information on the Expert Mission

Country visited	Georgia
Institution(s) visited	Scientific Research Center of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia
Name(s) of person(s) involved in the visit	Stylios Koulouris

Details of the Experts¹

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<p>1. <u>Objective of the mission</u></p>	<p>This mission aimed to record the current situation in Georgia regarding risk assessment and recommend the future steps and activities to develop and apply risk assessment methodologies, to develop methodologies to collect and analyse data, to provide risk communication and further extend scientific network and working group.</p>
<p>2. <u>Observations: state of play; outcome of discussions; etc.</u></p>	<p>Georgia has already a very well design and structured system for Food Risk Assessment.</p> <p>The Risk Assessment Division (RAD) of the Scientific Research Center of Agriculture has a solid knowledge of the main concepts of Food Risk Analysis. RAD is a separate structural unit that in close collaboration with the pool of Experts of the “Scientific Council of Risk Assessment” (SCRA) performs Risk Assessment activities. In this context the structure is very similar to the one that EFSA is following with the Scientific Panels and the correspondence EFSA units. Risk Assessment activities are separate from Risk Management activities that are performed by the Food Safety Authority of Georgia and other bodies. The “Scientific Council of Risk Assessment” is coordinated by its chair and its work evaluated by the “Academy of Agricultural Sciences”. During the meeting the discussions focused on structure of the different bodies, distribution of responsibilities between the different bodies, methodologies and practical solutions on how to perform different activities related to Food Safety Risk Assessment and Risk Communication. Many of these aspects are regulated in the relevant legislation, but many others like the distribution of responsibilities between the “Scientific Council of Risk Assessment” and the “Risk Assessment Division”, the exact methodologies, the evidence base etc should be further defined and documented.</p> <p>As an example a risk assessment report on trans-fats has been presented, where the overall procedure was closely matching the one followed by EU organisations.</p>



<p>3. <u>Conclusions</u></p>	<p>Although the country has a very well defined and established Risk Assessment structure, and the scientific knowledge, experience and ability of the staff of the Risk Assessment Division and the experts of the Scientific Council of RA is high, having already published a considerable number of different opinions, further clarification is needed on both the responsibilities of the different bodies involved and of the exact methodology that should be followed. The different steps of Risk Assessment should be clearly defined in written instructions describing also the limitations. The small number of staff of RAD (only 4 staff members for all RA activities) is an additional limiting parameter.</p> <p>Especially regarding exposure assessment, there are considerable limitations as there is lack of both occurrence and concentration data for biological and chemical hazards and also lack of Consumption Data for the population of Georgia.</p> <p>Regarding the SCRA there is no clear procedures on how interested scientists can apply and what requirements for participation are.</p> <p>Although many topics related to practical concepts have been included in the draft agenda of this expert mission, the high interest of the participants in certain topics and the necessary expansion of the discussion in these topics (mostly related to structure and core methodology) have prevented the opportunity to present in details other practical topics including Risk Communication aspects.</p>
<p>4. <u>Recommendations</u> <u>(including possible areas and nature of future assistance)</u></p>	<p>As indicated above, clear and documented methodology should be developed to describe the balance of responsibilities between the different bodies involved in Risk Assessment, describing the exact way that Risk Assessment should be performed and defining the relevant timelines. The terms of reference of the SCRA should be clarified, describing the “modus operandi” of the council and the procedure and requirements for participation in it.</p> <p>As the current step of “Exposure Assessment” is performed due to lack of data by “approximation” (either by assumptions through expert knowledge or by using data from other countries) through a “probable exposure” approach, accurate data needed to be collected in a national level on occurrence and concentration of different potential food hazards. Also it would be extremely useful for a National Consumption Survey to be conducted based on EFSA guidance to collect accurate and up to date data on the consumption profile of the different groups of the Georgian population. The above</p>



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	<p>activities would require considerable resources in terms of expert staff, equipment and funds.</p> <p>Although the staff exhibited high knowledge of the main Risk Assessment aspects, further training is recommended in more practical parts of methodology like: “Systematic literature Review”, “Risk Communication”, “Concentration and Consumption Data Collection”, “Expert Elicitation Knowledge”, “Handling variability and Uncertainty”, “Identifying Emerging Risks” and others.</p> <p>Also A Crisis Protocol is recommended to be established that will describe the role of both Risk Assessment and Risk Management bodies at a Food Crisis incident and of their way of interaction.</p>
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Signature: __Stylianos Koulouris__

Date: ____23/01/2017____