



Key Country Issues Cyprus



A Day with the Journalists

***3rd EFSA-Communications Expert Network (CEN)
Tallinn, 26-27 September 2017***

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- *Informative Lunch Meeting with Mass Media in Cyprus*
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Informative Lunch Meeting with Mass Media



Title:

“ **Transparency and Communication** in the **Food Safety and Quality** by the **Competent authorities of the Cyprus Ministry of Health** “

When: **16th March 2017**

The organizers/ Venue: **(Ministry of Health)**

- **State General Laboratory (Risk Assessor and Laboratory Control)**
- **Food Control & Environmental Risk Health Services (Risk Manager)**

Target:

Give **correct, valid and timely information** to the citizens on the issues of **Public Health Protection and Prevention of Food-Related Diseases.**





The idea behind



Came from the exchange of best practices between the EU-Member States in our network (CEN)

- *Communicate with Mass Media (MM) during “peace time”*
- *Improve mutual trust between MM and Food Competent Authorities*
- *Good opportunity to present the work on Food Safety & Quality (F.S.Q) of the Ministry of Health to the journalists*
- *Well Informed / prepared journalists*

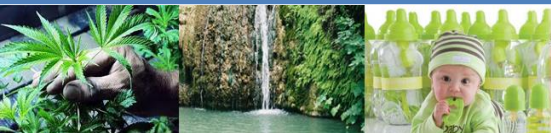




Preparations of the meeting



- Directors positive with the idea, General Director MoH supportive (We were very enthusiastic)
- First time of such kind of meeting (informative but also educational for the journalists)
- Agenda (Information to be given to the public **AND** Tips to facilitate the Journalists work on F.S.Q issues)
- Date/Time (16/3, Thursday, Lunch Time (offer them lunch), No other MM interest/focus (political issue etc.))
- Invitations (send well in advance-2 weeks before—need to Remind)
- Journalists were invited from across the whole range of journalism (Newspapers, Magazines, TV Channels)





The meeting focused, among others, on:



- a) Information to Mass Media representatives of the role and work of these two Food authorities, clarifying the different role of each other
- b) Exploring effective ways of communication & cooperation between MM and the Food authorities
- c) Strengthening mutual support in communication between MM and the Food authorities

The aim was to:

Strengthen communication channels for timely and valid information, by disseminating effective messages to citizens regarding Food Safety and Quality.







Content of the Meeting



Welcome speech from the **General Director of the MoH** (Mrs Chr. Yiannaki)

*Interest at a high administrative & policy level
for the prevention of food-born diseases*



"A protected citizen is a well-informed citizen"

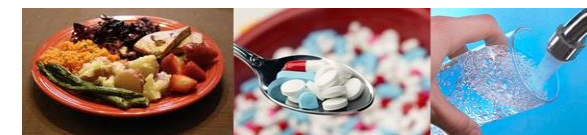
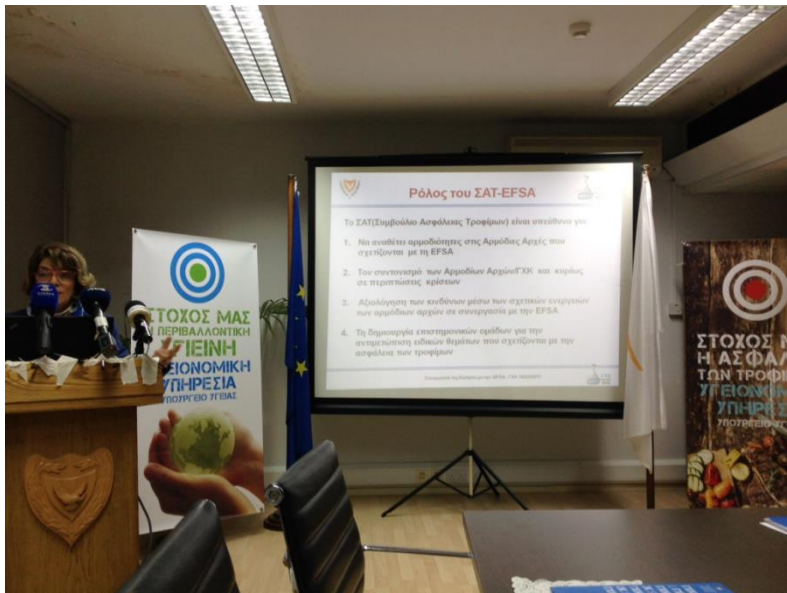


- The Directors of the **Cyprus SGL** and the **FCEHS** provided information about the **competency, roles and work** of their services, **clarifying the role** of each of them
- Reference to the **role** of the **Cyprus Food Safety Council**



➤ Special reference on Food Risk assessment

- the cooperation between EFSA and Cyprus
- the role of EFSA
- Cyprus work (EU MENU, national tool “ImproRisk model”)





➤ Food e-Trade

- regulation
- implementation of an integrated national control mechanism

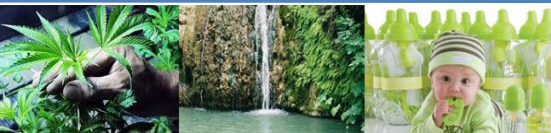


➤ Food Risk Communication and Food Crisis Communication

- Reference to EFSA's Guidelines
- Risks & Emerging Risks
- Risk Perception
- Cooperation MM with Scientists (food crisis)
- EFSA glossary (with scientific terms)
- Uncertainty
- Website links for Info on Food Safety Issues
- Who is Who



Coherent, consistent and non-conflicting Messages communicated to the public



- Press Release: **“Acrylamide on Food-Tips for the Consumers”**
&
- Informative materials on **Food Safety** (leaflets, publications etc.)
Prepared by the “State General Laboratory”

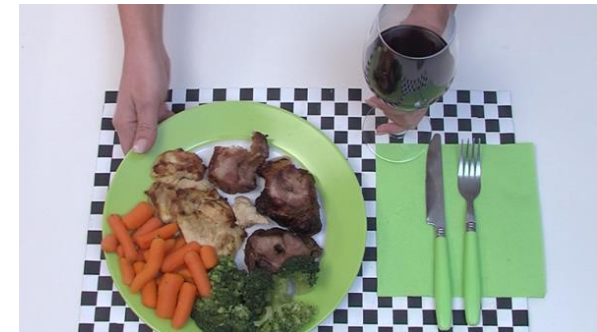




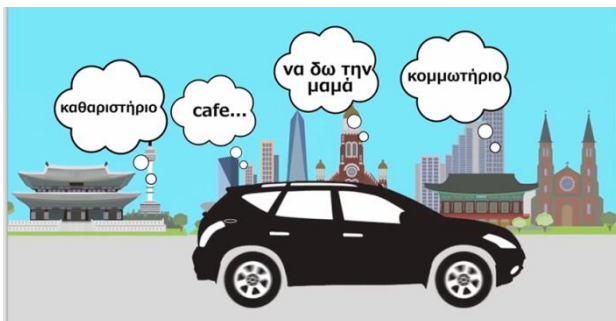
Video with Tips for Consumers on Food shopping, transport, preservation and cooking



Prepared by the “Food Control & Environmental Risk Health Services” (4 minutes):
“From the shopping basket to our plate”



ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΚΑΛΑΘΙ
στο ΠΙΑΤΟ ΣΑΣ



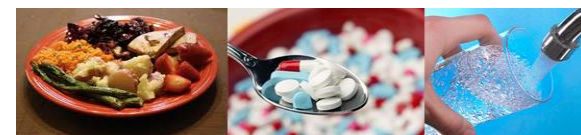


Photos





Photos



- ❑ 4 TV channels/4 Newspapers/4 e-press/2 Magazines/CNA/Press & Information Office AND 11 officials-Ministry of Health were participated
- ❑ Meeting Coverage from:
 - TV central News (ANT iwo, Alpha, MEGA One) (the same night)
 - Newspapers, Magazines & e-Press (the day after)
- ❑ Promotion of the Video under MM's Corporate Responsibility (useful tool/very informative to consumers)
- ❑ Interview of the two Directors (together) on a daily Informative TV show RIK 1 (APO MERA SE MERA), 2 weeks after (5-4-2017)





Feedback of the Meeting (2)



❑ Improvement of cooperation with MM

- Show more Trust to the Competent Authorities
- They ask for Information, they know better from whom/ give the appropriate time for preparation
- They are willing to promote the work of the authorities
(e.g. Annual Reports of the Competent Authorities-2016)



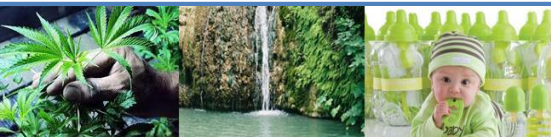


Lessons Learned



- Important for the journalists to listen/be informed/be educated on scientific issues
- Interest on new channels of scientific information
- They need numbers
- Need info in writing and electronically (not only in hard copy)
- They are always under time pressure (meeting duration max 1 ½ h)
- Not all, all the days and hours of the day are available
- Such meetings must be organized a day with no other hot issues on their agendas (political, Parliament etc.)
- To attract their attention we must be ready to announce something new at the meeting, and/or a high official to be present
- Personal contacts with them facilitates the communication
- Very pleased of such kind of informative meeting
- They asked us to organize similar meetings in the future

We keep learning - Space for improvements for next meetings





Conclusions



- Mass Media has very Important Role to play on Raising public awareness on Food Safety issue
- Strengthening of mutual trust between Food competent Authorities and Mass Media Representatives is crucial
- Ensure the effectiveness of communication to the public on F.S (especially during periods of food crisis)
- Well Informed/Prepared Journalists is a prerequisite
- Involvement of all Relevant Competent Authorities
- Effective and timely promotion of informative tools
- Easy Access to valid Information (website, journals, etc.)

Overall target:

Gain public confidence/trust by disseminating effective messages to citizens regarding Food Safety and Quality



Thank you for your attention

