

The fight against food fraud in Europe

EU coordinated actions

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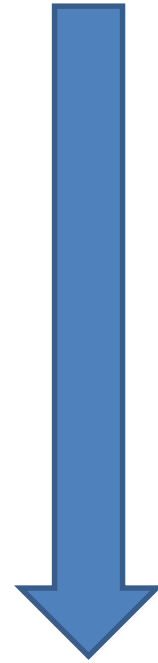
24. september 2019

Food fraud workshop



Effects of food fraud

- **Physical harm**
 - Short term illness of a single consumer
 - Nutritional deficit
 - Serious illness of multiple consumers
 - Multiple consumer fatalities
- **Economic harm**
 - Financial loss to a few consumers
 - Financial loss to multiple consumers
 - Serious financial loss to multiple consumers
 - Serious detrimental economic impact
- **Reputational harm**
 - Short term public criticism of the regulator
 - Enduring public criticism of the regulator
 - Complete loss of public trust in the regulator
 - Complete loss of trust in the government



EU coordinated actions

- The EU Food Fraud Network exchanges information within the **Administrative Assistance and Cooperation (AAC)** system.
 - Active since 2015
- A tool for an EU country to rapidly contact the competent authorities of another EU country.
 - Allows swift reaction when risks to public health are detected in the food chain
- The AAC system works on a voluntary basis and only for cross border issues.
 - Does not represent the entirety of non-compliances nor food fraud incidents

Annual report 2018 (1)

Figure 1 shows the number of requests created in the AAC-FF system per Member State (Member States), by the European Commission and by Norway during 2018.

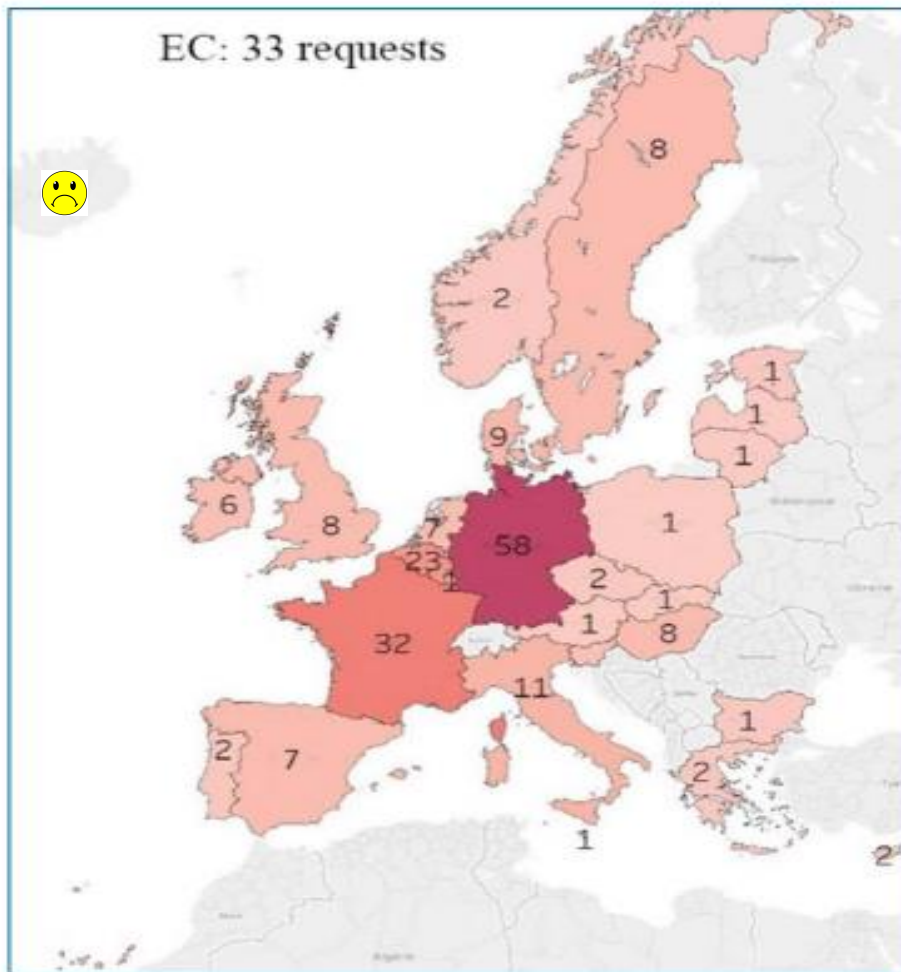


Figure 1 - AAC-FF requests per Member States and EC in 2018

Annual report 2018 (2)

Figure 2 - Number of requests for administrative assistance concerning fraud suspicions in the AAC from 2016 to 2018.

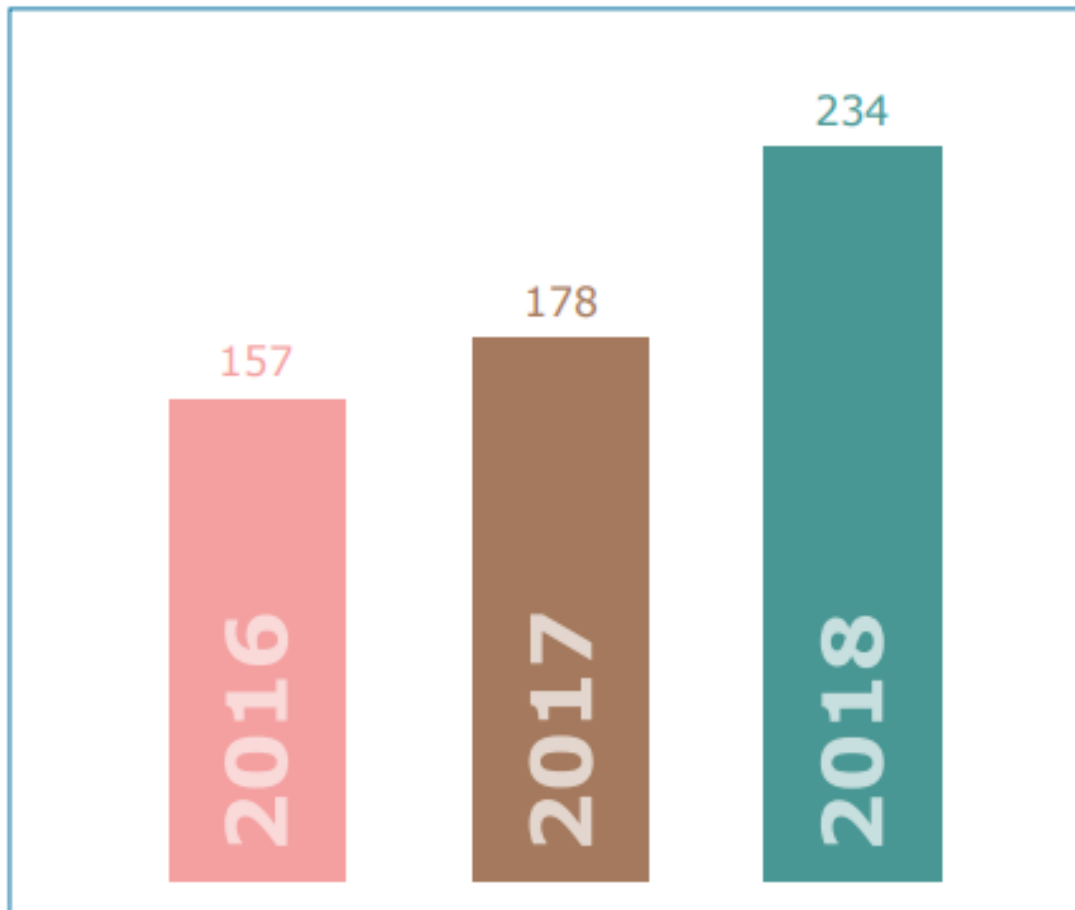
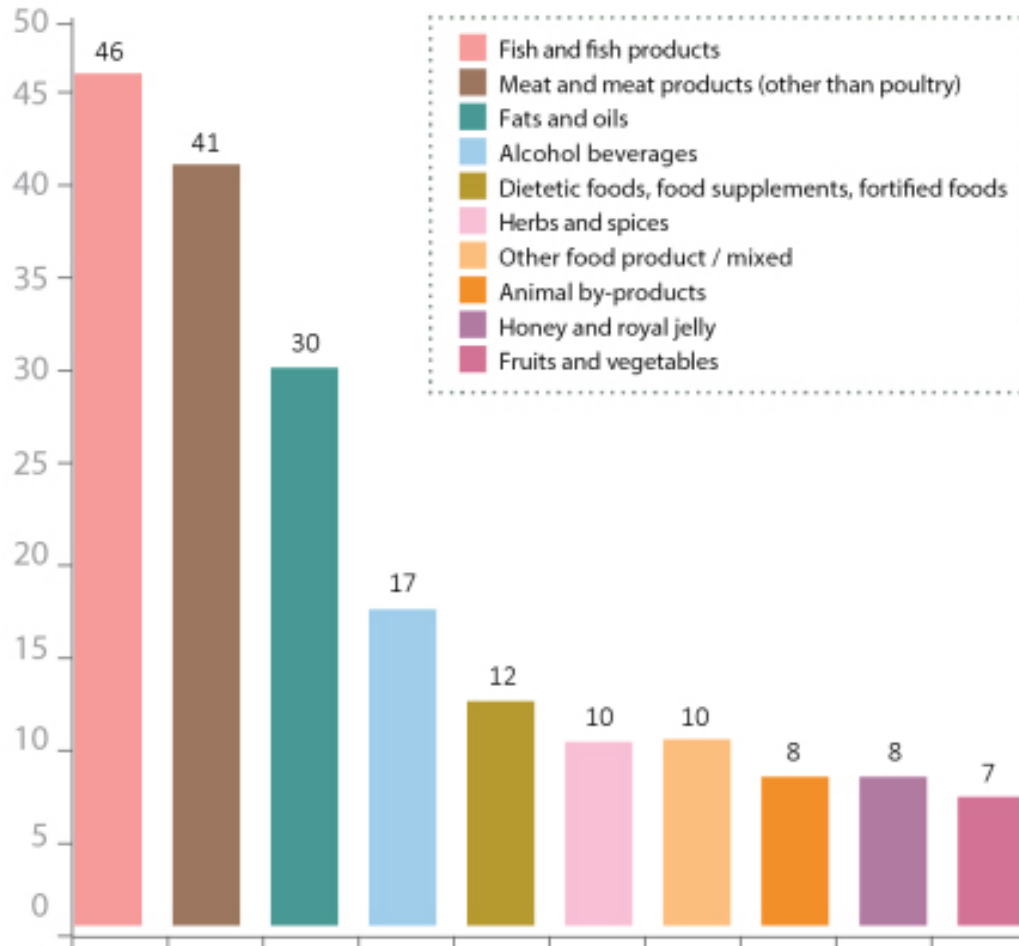


Figure 2 – AAC-FF requests created per year

Annual report 2018 (3)

AAC-Food Fraud requests created per year



Top 10 categories in the AAC-Food Fraud in 2018

Annual report 2018 (4)

Figure 5 - Shows the type of suspected violations reported in the AAC-FF in 2018

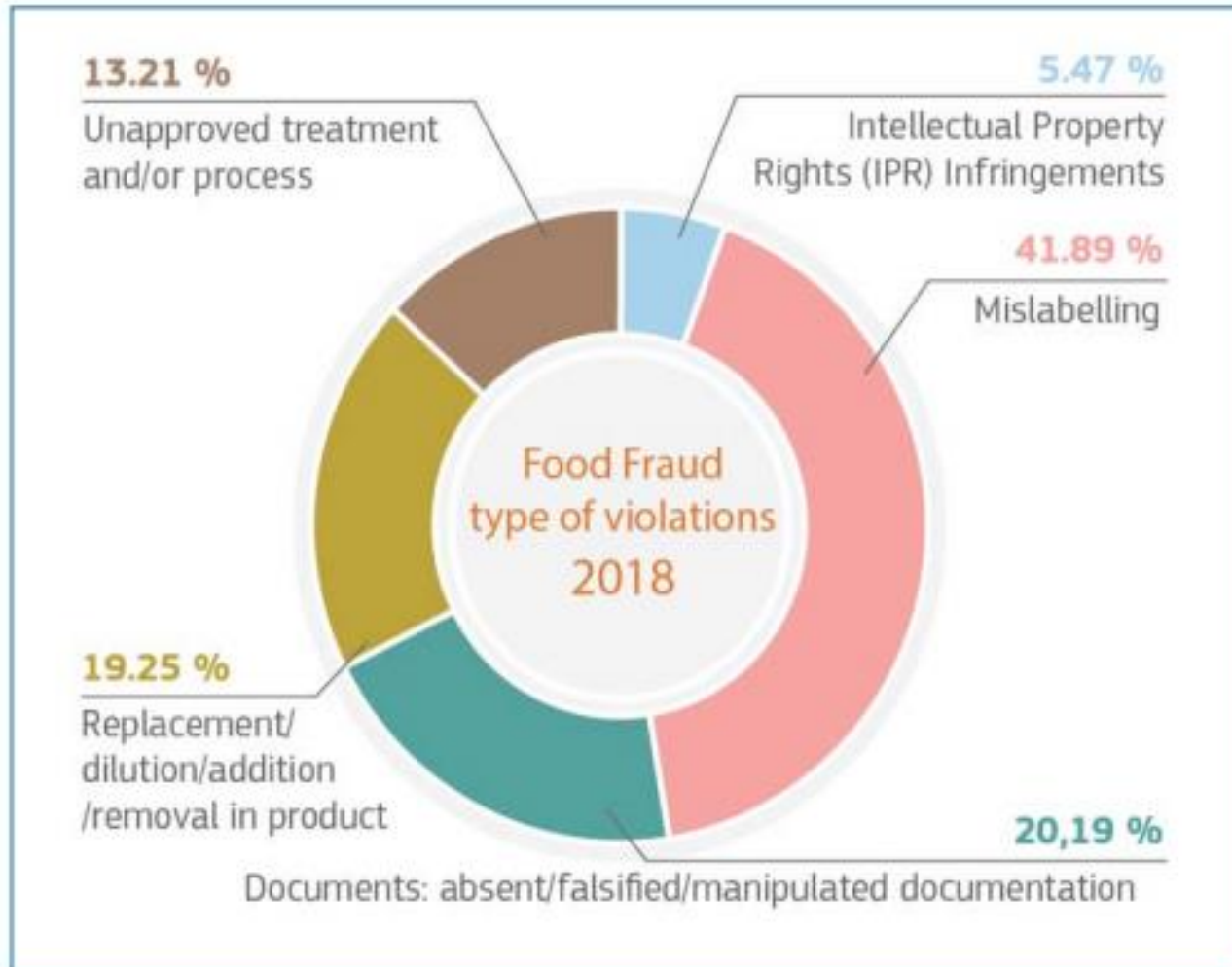


Figure 5 – Type of suspected violations in the AAC-FF in 2018

Annual report 2018 (5)

Figures 6(a) to 6(e) - Show a classification per type of suspected violation reported for the first five categories of figure 4.

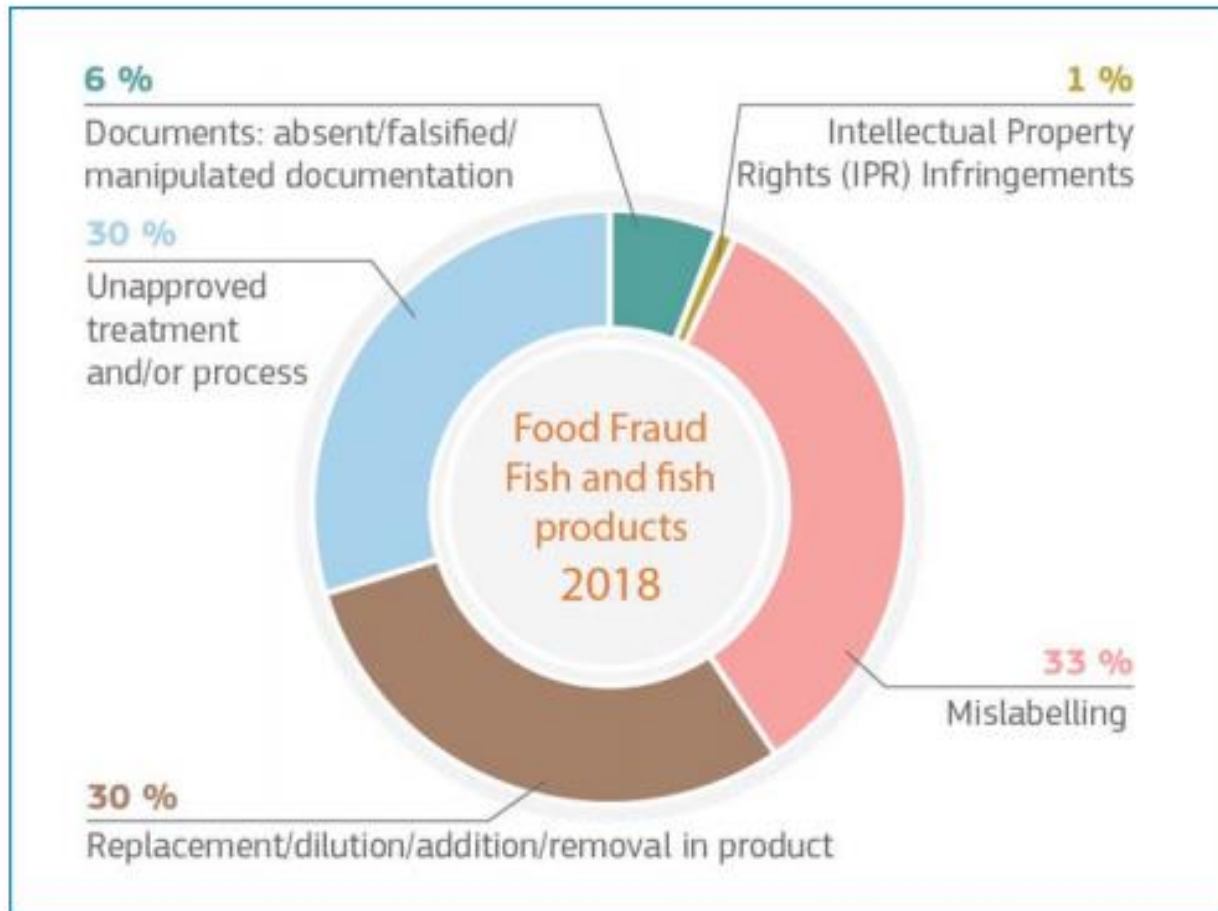


Figure 6(a) – Types of suspected violations relating to fish and fish products

OPSON

- Operation OPSON is a joint Europol/INTERPOL operation targeting **fake and substandard food and beverages.**
 - Joint efforts of police, customs, national food regulatory bodies and partners from the private sector
- Aims to establish partnerships in order to provide a cohesive response to the above mentioned crimes.
- Protecting consumers by seizing and destroying substandard foods and **identifying the criminals behind these networks.**

Operation OPSON VIII

- 16.000 tonnes and 33 million litres of potentially dangerous fake food and drink was seized.
 - **Worth more than €100 million (14 milljarðar ISK)**
 - 67.000 checks carried out at shops, markets, airports, seaports and industrial estates
- **672 individuals arrested...so far.**
 - Ongoing investigations in many countries
- *"This operation shows yet again that criminals will take advantage of any and every opportunity open to them to make a profit."*

Action #1 – Organic products



- Aim: Protect the reputation of the EU organic logo, consumer expectations and the confidence in more general terms in the EU food chain.
- 90.000 tonnes of suspicious organic products were checked
 - 9 individuals were arrested by the Spanish Guardia Civil (SEPRONA)
- Illicit practices uncovered included:
 - Use of unauthorized substances
 - Diversion of conventionally produced food to the organic market
 - Use of falsified documents to blur the traceability of the products



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Action #2 – 2,4-Dinitrophenol

- 2,4 – Dinitrophenol (DNP) is a toxic chemical which is sold as a fat burner.
 - Consumption of DNP can have severe consequences for the health of consumers and has proven fatal in a number of cases.
- 23 seizures of DNP were made through intelligence-led interventions at residential addresses, test purchases and through the detection of parcels by custom authorities.
 - Estimated that 50.000 capsules of DNP were prevented from entering the consumer market.
 - Over 75 online sales offerings have been removed.

Action #3 - Coffee

- A targeted action in order to uncover possible fraudulent practices pertaining to coffee labelled as 100% Arabica.
- Focused on the substitution of pure arabica coffee (coffee variety of the highest quality) by cheaper lowland coffee (Robusta).
- Nearly 400 samples were analysed.





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...if you were a fraudster?

- *Example 1:* You just so happen to be a large egg producer. You currently have 8 tonnes of eggs (2 month shelf life) in stock...which expire tomorrow.
 - What do you do?
- Answer: Re-label!

Italian authorities have seized eight tons of eggs whose expiry date had been fraudulently extended in the packing centre to prolong the durability of the product.

[Ministero della Salute](#): 10/06/19

...if you were a fraudster?

- *Example 2:* You own a popular sushi restaurant in downtown Reykjavík. There is a national shortage of tuna and you have completely sold out but the customers demand tuna! It just so happens that you just received a large shipment of tilapia and your wife is a professional cake artist...
 - What do you do?
- **Answer: Just paint it!**

Students of a biology class at a college in London (Ontario, Canada) shockingly learnt that seven out of the nine sushi samples that they analysed were not what was indicated on the label. A common finding was the use of escolar mislabelled as white tuna. Less common was the use of tilapia, which is a naturally white fish, mislabelled as red tuna, implying the use of a red colourant. .

Thank you!

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