

BfR and BVL simulate food crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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How do you prepare for a crisis? When does the general public have to be notified of a risk? And how should authorities deal with scientific uncertainty? These questions are being discussed by food safety experts from Germany and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo from 22-26 October 2018 at the practice workshop “Dealing with foodborne disease outbreaks”. The workshop is being jointly organised by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) and the Food Safety Agency (FSA) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and financed by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL).

The investigation of a foodborne disease outbreak is practiced on the basis of an interdisciplinary simulation game. In a fictitious scenario, people in various towns and cities throughout the country take ill with salmonellosis after eating poultry meat. It is demonstrated how a scientific risk assessment can be conducted under time pressure once the pathogen and affected foods have been identified. The participants simultaneously establish the official responsibilities in their own country – a challenge in light of the complex administrative structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The topic of risk and crisis communication is then dealt with in more depth at a simulated press conference. Finally, with the support of the experts from the BfR and BVL, the 32 participants establish the basis for guidelines illustrating the procedure for dealing with outbreaks of foodborne disease in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In a first appraisal, the workshop serves to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the existing structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One result of the workshop may be an application for a twinning project with the European Union in which sustainable structures for risk assessment, management and communication are developed and set up on this basis.

The concept for the interactive workshop was developed in April 2018 by food safety authorities from Germany (BfR), Portugal (ASAE), Croatia (HAH) and Cabo Verde (ARFA) and can be transferred to many countries. It serves to identify structural gaps in official food safety within a country and develop efficient structures so that the local authorities can cope adequately with a foodborne outbreak.

More information on the subject of salmonella at the BfR website

A-Z index for salmonella:

https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/a-z_index/salmonella-130202.html

Frequently asked questions about protection against infections with salmonella:

https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/fragen_und_antworten_zum_schutz_vor_infektionen_mit_salmonellen-199146.html



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About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in Germany. It advises the Federal Government and Federal Laender on questions of food, chemical and product safety. The BfR conducts its own research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

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