

Communication 011/2025

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Strengthening existing Indo-German cooperation BfR President Andreas Hensel visits the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

Transnational scientific exchange, a visit to the most important conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics in India and a meeting of the Indo-German Working Group on Agriculture, Food Industry and Consumer Protection: these and other points were on the agenda of the delegation trip organised by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The aim of the delegation trip was to intensify cooperation with India, the specialised ministry responsible for agricultural issues and other Indian institutions. Professor Andreas Hensel, President of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), also took part in the delegation trip and also visited the Indian cooperation partner, the local Food Safety Standards Authority (FSSAI). The purpose of the visit was to further intensify the existing partnership and to evaluate joint topics for future projects.

From 17 to 20 March 2025, BfR President Professor Andreas Hensel travelled to India together with a delegation from the BMEL, led by State Secretary Silvia Bender. The presidents and representatives of the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI), the Julius Kühn Institute (JKI), the German Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE), the Thünen Institute (TI) and the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) from the BMEL were also present. Industry representatives were also part of the group.

In addition to attending the 10th Raisina Dialogue, India's most important conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, the 8th meeting of the Joint Indian-German Working Group on Agriculture, Food Industry and Consumer Protection (JWG) also took place. In a presentation, Professor Hensel gave an overview of the existing cooperation between the BfR and the BVL with the FSSAI and other Indian partners.

The BfR and the FSSAI signed a cooperation agreement back in 2015 and have been working closely together ever since. Professor Hensel visited the FSSAI together with Dr Marina Rusch, Head of the 'Herbicides & Maximum Residue Levels' section in the BVL's 'Plant Protection Products' department. The meeting focussed on identifying common topics.

These included food contact materials, biotoxins and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Previously, a delegation led by G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, Director General of the FSSAI, visited the BfR in December 2024. At this meeting, they exchanged views on novel foods and marine biotoxins, among other things. In addition, several FSSAI experts take part in the annual BfR Summer Academy, a professional training programme on risk assessment and risk communication in the area of food safety.

The FSSAI reports to the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and is responsible for regulating and monitoring food safety in India. This includes establishing standards and guidelines in the area of food safety as well as providing scientific advice to the Indian central government and the states.

Further information on the BfR website on the BfR's cooperations:

A-Z Index Cooperations (in German)

https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/a-z_index/kooperationen-6925.html

Communication: Strengthening Indo-German partnership for better food safety

<https://mobil.bfr.bund.de/cm/349/strengthening-indo-german-partnership-for-better-food-safety.pdf>

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. The BfR advises the Federal Government and the States ('Laender') on questions of food, chemicals and product safety. The BfR conducts independent research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

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Publisher:

German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment

Max-Dohrn-Straße 8-10

10589 Berlin, Germany

T +49 30 18412-0

F +49 30 18412-99099

bfr@bfr.bund.de

bfr.bund.de/en

Institution under public law

Represented by the president Professor Dr Dr Dr h.c. Andreas Hensel

Supervisory Authority: Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture

VAT ID No. DE 165 893 448

Responsible according to the German Press Law: Dr Suzan Fiack



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