

Fairness in the food supply chain: Commission proposes to increase price transparency

Having [banned unfair trading practices](#) and [improved producer cooperation](#), the Commission is today presenting the third element to improve fairness in the food supply chain by introducing greater transparency in the way prices are reported throughout the chain.

The European Commission today tabled a proposal that will make available crucial information on how prices are determined as agri-food products move along the food supply chain.

Buying and selling price differences can provide information about intermediary costs (such as transport, insurance, storage, etc.) between seller and buyer. Greater transparency can support better business decisions and improve trust in fair dealing between the stages in the food supply chain. Having access to timely and easily accessible information about market developments is also key to compete effectively in global markets.

Agriculture and rural development Commissioner Phil **Hogan** said:
"Strengthening the position of farmers in the food supply chain has been a priority for the Commission. Enhancing market transparency will allow equal access to and greater clarity about price information, making our food chain fairer and better balanced. These new rules will complement the recently adopted directive banning unfair trading practices in empowering weaker and smaller actors of the food supply chain and their introduction reflects the very significant public support that there is throughout the EU to strengthen the role of farmer in the food supply chain."

While there is a large amount of information available about developments in agricultural markets (prices, volumes of production, stocks, etc.), there is almost no market information about other key markets in the agri-food supply chain, namely those that operate between farmers and consumers at the food processing and the retail level. This asymmetry of information between farmers and the other actors in the food supply chain puts farmers at a significant disadvantage in the market and erodes trust in fair dealing. This lack of information on market developments from processors and retailers has been called the 'black box' of the agri-food supply chain and today's proposal unlocks that box.

The proposed measures will cover the meat, eggs, dairy, fruit and vegetables, arable crops, sugar, and olive oil sectors. They build on existing data collection systems and procedures that are already in place and used by operators and Member States to report market information to the Commission, with a now wider scope. Each Member State will be responsible for the collection of price and market data. The Commission recommends that Member States choose the most cost-effective approach and do not target small and

medium-sized enterprises to reduce the administrative burden. Member States will communicate the data to the Commission, who will in turn make the monitoring available on its [agri-food data portal](#) and [EU market observatories](#). It is essential that the information provided by the Member States is accurate and timely.

According to the Commission's [Better Regulation](#) procedures, the proposal is now published for a 4-weeks' public consultation period. It will then be adopted by the European Commission and is planned to enter into force six months after its adoption.

Background

The Commission has been working towards a fairer and more balanced food supply chain since the beginning of its mandate.

In 2016, the [Agricultural Markets Task Force](#) (AMTF) was set up with the aim of assessing the role of farmers in the wider food supply chain and make [recommendations](#) on how it can be strengthened and improved.

Based on these recommendations, the Commission launched an [inception impact assessment](#) and a [public consultation](#) on the improvement of the food supply chain in 2017, both of which covered three elements: unfair trading practices, producer cooperation, and market transparency.

An EU-wide opinion poll published in February 2018 shows that a great majority of respondents (88%) considers that strengthening farmers' role in the food supply chain is important. Confirming this trend, 96% of the respondents to the 2017 public consultation on the modernisation of the CAP agreed with the proposition that improving farmers' position in the value chain should be an objective of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy.

The Commission presented last year its proposal to ban unfair trading practices in the food supply chain, which was voted by co-legislators in April 2019. These new rules will ensure the protection of 100% of European farmers as well as small and mid-range suppliers against unfair trading practices in the food supply chain.

For More Information

[Proposal for More Market transparency in the EU's food supply chain](#)

[Commission welcomes Parliament's support to ban unfair trading practices](#)

'EU MED means business': entrepreneurs

from Southern Neighbourhood set out priorities for action to boost growth and jobs

Some 150 young entrepreneurs, economic leaders and drivers of socio-economic change from Europe's Southern Neighbourhood have set out their most urgent priorities for policy makers in the region and in the EU, to overcome barriers to higher economic growth and job creation.

The European Commission organised a first edition of 'EU Med means business' – Shaping the future of entrepreneurship in the South' on 21-22 May in Brussels with parallel events in Tunis (Tunisia), Cairo (Egypt), Irdib (Jordan) and Rabat (Morocco). The participants developed recommendations to policy makers, and then voted in order to identify their [twelve top priorities for action](#) regarding investment, entrepreneurship and job creation. These will be used in preparation of future EU approaches, but will also be transmitted to decision makers in the region by the European Commission and through the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), and may be updated in the future.

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, **Johannes Hahn**, said: *"Following vibrant discussions with so many creative and talented entrepreneurs in the presence of policy makers and financial institutions, we have received a clear list of priority actions. These are important messages for policy makers in Europe, but just as important for decision makers in the region. We will use the outcome of this event in our interactions with the governments and in forthcoming meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean". The Commissioner underlined that he hoped the discussion on the priorities for action would continue, saying: "During my time as Commissioner, I have worked to put socio-economic development at the centre of the partnership between the EU and its neighbourhood. Improving opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs is a win-win scenario: young people on both sides of the Mediterranean need economic opportunities to be able to build their own future. We must all work together and listen to the voice of those who are creating employment for the rising generation."*

The event focused on how to:

- Attract more foreign and domestic investment and improve levels of job creation;
- Unleash the potential of the private sector, and in particular of smaller enterprises, which create the most sustainable new jobs;
- Boost talents and skills of young people and promote entrepreneurship and innovation to reduce the high levels of youth unemployment

Background

EU cooperation, while providing a tailor-made mix for each partner country's

needs, offers a wide toolbox to help create economic opportunities:

- supporting legislative and administrative reforms and infrastructure building to lift barriers to investment and to create a more **enabling business environment**;
- providing **capacity building, training and education** for authorities and entrepreneurs, including on digitalisation;
- creating adequate and accessible lending channels to allow Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) a **better access to finance**;
- promoting **quality and relevant vocational education and training** to provide people with the competencies needed to meet the specific needs of the job market and businesses;

The main instrument to implement these actions is the **European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)**. Out of €10.8 billion allocated for the region via the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for the period 2014-2020, nearly €4.2 billion has been dedicated so far to socio-economic cooperation. This figure will rise before the end of the current budget period, and is expected to reach around 50% of the total allocation for the Southern Neighbourhood overall.

This is complemented by finance made available under the [EU External Investment Plan \(EIP\)](#) and the [Neighbourhood Investment Platform \(NIP\)](#) e.g. to facilitate access to finance and modernise crucial infrastructure in transport and energy. On top of this, €356 million has been channelled through the ENI to the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) in the Southern Neighbourhood (2014-2020). Under the EU Research and Innovation programme [Horizon 2020](#), the Southern Neighbourhood is benefiting from a total amount of €763.9 million, reaching over 1500 participants and nearly 1200 projects.

More info:

[Infographic – Shaping the Future of Entrepreneurship in the South](#)

[Dedicated website – EU Med means business](#)

[Opening Remarks by Commissioner Hahn at the ‘EU Med means business’ – Shaping the future of entrepreneurship in the South’](#)

[Social Media Campaign](#) including videos of the participants [Sima Najjar](#), [Yahya Bouhlel](#) and [Amina Mourid](#).

[Website – European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations](#)

[ESAs launch consultation on technical](#)

standards on the reporting of intra-group transactions and risk concentration for Financial Conglomerates

The three European Supervisory Authorities, the European Banking Authority (EBA), the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) and the European Securities Markets Supervisory Authority (ESMA) launched today a [consultation on draft Implementing Technical Standards \(ITSs\)](#) on the reporting of intra-group transactions and risk concentration for Financial Conglomerates. The draft technical standards were developed based on the mandate included in Financial Conglomerates Directive (FICOD). The consultation runs until 15 August 2019.

The draft technical standards aim at offering a single framework of requirements for the reporting of intra-group transactions and risk concentration by financial conglomerates subject to supplementary supervision in the European Union.

The ITSs provide the foundation for the harmonisation of reporting, with one single set of templates and a single embedded dictionary using common definitions and a single set of instructions to fill in the templates. The ITSs will help the coordinators and other relevant competent authorities to identify relevant issues and exchange information more efficiently, thereby reducing costs and fostering a level playing field across financial conglomerates in the European Union.

Consultation process

For responding to this consultation please use the [following link](#).

Please note that the deadline for the submission of comments is **Thursday, 15 August 2019 at 23.59 hrs CET**.

All contributions received will be published following the close of the consultation, unless requested otherwise.

Legal basis

These draft ITS have been developed according to the mandate provided in Article 21 a (2b) and (2c) of Directive 2002/87/EC.

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the grocery retail sector in France

The European Commission can confirm that on 20 May 2019 its officials carried out unannounced inspections at the premises of companies active in the grocery retail sector in France.

The Commission has concerns that two grocery retail companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices ([Article 101](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the French competition authority.

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary investigatory step into suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the companies concerned cooperate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.

It is always time to test: Spring European Testing Week



At present, reaching and testing those at risk of infection with HIV, hepatitis HBV (HBV) or hepatitis C (HCV) is still a public health challenge across Europe. Data show that every second person living with HIV in the EU/EEA is diagnosed late in the course of their infection. Similarly, a large proportion of the estimated nine million Europeans living with chronic hepatitis B or C are unaware that they are infected. In its recent evidence-based public health guidance on HIV, hepatitis B and C testing, ECDC advocates for integrated testing for the three viruses given that they have common modes of transmission, significant overlaps in affected population groups and high levels of co-infection.

“Testing is an entry point to treatment and care. Effective treatment of HIV or viral hepatitis either eliminates or suppresses the viruses”, explains ECDC Director Andrea Ammon, “this means treatment improves the health of those tested positive and prevents further transmission. That is why we support the efforts of European Testing Week.”

This year, European Testing Week tries to set a focus on scaling up testing efforts in prison settings. Ammon adds:

“Europe needs a stronger focus on working closely with vulnerable populations. This will improve efforts to identify those who are infected but not diagnosed and link them to appropriate healthcare services.”

Interrupting transmission with test-and-treat approach

Compared to the general public, people in prison have a higher burden of communicable diseases such as HBV, HCV, HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis. Data show that among people with a positive diagnostic test in prison, sizeable proportions were unaware of their status (53% of those tested positive for hepatitis B, 12% of those with hepatitis C and 3% of those who were HIV positive were unaware of their infection).

The two ECDC and EMCDDA public health guidance documents on active case finding and prevention of blood-borne viruses (BBV) such as HIV and hepatitis B or C in prison settings promote the active offer for BBV testing to all people in prison upon admission and throughout the time in prison. Evidence shows that pro-active provision of BBV testing leads to a higher uptake of testing offers and health promotion as well as peer education have shown to increase HIV testing uptake.

[European Testing Week](#) runs from 17 to 24 May 2019 and organisations can sign up on the website.