

Statement by Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, on World Food Safety Day

I ate my first apple when I was 7 years old. I still recall how it tasted in my mouth: juicy, sweet and crisp. How could I ever forget? Food is powerful: it shakes our senses, evokes memories, and comforts us. Food is part of our everyday lives: it's nurturing us, it brings us together: we love sharing meals with people we love, talking about what we cook, trying new recipes.

Today, as we celebrate the first World Food Safety Day, I invite you to take a moment to reflect upon the efforts required to bring safe food to our tables and pay tribute to all the people who make it possible: farmers, chefs, agronomists, veterinarians, auditors and so many others who work around the clock to make safe food a reality. This day is also an opportunity to reflect on what still remains to be achieved on food safety and security, human and animal health, sustainable development and economic prosperity.

As a Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, I can proudly state that in the European Union we enjoy the highest food safety standards due to a number of effective actions and systems that are put in place to tackle global challenges on food safety. Food safety implies protecting health and preventing illness, and this is why it is also closely linked to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the EU, food 'safety nets' are strong. We have a solid legislative basis to control hazards in the supply chain. To make sure that the legislation is implemented and enforced, we rely on dozens of audits and inspections carried out within and outside the EU.

We base our decisions on sound scientific evidence. To do so, we rely on the [European Food Safety Agency \(EFSA\)](#) that brings together scientists from all Member States to provide valuable scientific expertise. I am glad that during my mandate EFSA's has been strengthened.

Furthermore, we have a solid traceability system that covers all stages of food production, processing and distribution. For the last 40 years the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed has ensured that urgent notifications and alerts for food and feed risks are reported, processed and responded to efficiently.

Finally, we must be proud that our rules are often perceived as golden standards and we promote their uptake in international context, notably by working hand in hand with International organisations, such as [Food World Organisation \(FAO\)](#) and [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#). It is no surprise that the World Food Safety Day was established under the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius – International standards in all key areas of food safety. Equally. We also promote our model via, the "[Better Training for Safer Food](#)"

initiative that aims to keep staff in EU and non-EU countries involved in official control activities up-to-date with EU law in the areas of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare and plant health.

I am very glad that now we have a specific day that celebrates food safety. What would be my wish for the years to come? I think it is time we went much further: making sure that the food we eat is not only safe but also healthy, respectful of the environment, and accessible to everyone.