

European Working-Community for Food-Inspection and Consumer Protection



NEWSLETTER

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The European Working Community for Food-Inspection and Consumer Protection is an organisation, which brings together the professional associations representing Food and Meat Inspectors from Member-States of the EU. Germany and France founded it in 1991.

The EWFC promotes uniform standards of Meat and Food Inspection in the EU and represents the professional interests of its 3.500 Members.

The original aims of EWFC were to set-up and organise food-inspection, training of food-inspectors and future co-operation in this field throughout the EU. So the main task was to establish a

European organisation for staff that was working within the disciplines of food-monitoring and inspection and consumer protection.

The EWFC has a central aim of contacting professional organisations in all Member-States of the EU. We wish to contact all such bodies representing Food-Inspectors, Meat-Inspectors, Veterinary Surgeons, Food-technicians, Food-chemists and Doctors.

The EWFC represents the views of its members to The European Commission in order to influence the construction and the development of EU legislation.

*Get together is a beginning.
Hold together is a progress.
Work together is a success.*

(Henry Ford)

Smiley-Project in Europe

Germany

At the moment there are some smiley projects in the above country but they are limited to: Nordrhein-Westfalen, Zwickau (Saxony) and Berlin (but only in the district of Pankow). Participation in these projects is voluntary but even then some negative scores are published on the Internet. Here are the details of the various projects:

Berlin-Pankow



The Smiley is awarded to premises and restaurants, which when they have their official control visit have above average standards of quality and hygienic. Successful premises are granted a certificate and a sticker

with the logo. The legal basis for this action is found within the law of consumer information (VIG), renewed in 2008, which allows different methods of communicating such information to consumers.

Hence, the above law grants, to everyone, the right of information on issues that involve official controls. A similar regulation/settlement has been successfully in practice for years in Denmark.

The Smiley in Berlin-Pankow is a voluntary trial on a small scale. Many premises in the city have shown interest in this project. The experience gained during this work will be evaluated and communicated to other districts with the aim of establishing a capital-wide smiley award.

Publishing the results of official food controls is not yet compulsory in Germany. The rate of non-compliance of restaurants in the above district is approaching 30%, mainly due to poor standards of hygiene.

The Smiley system should counteract this high incidence. The "VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE e. V (=Consumer Initiative organisation) has helped the district office in it's efforts with this task.

The basis for participation in the smiley system is a voluntary agreement between the district office of Pankow and the owners of the food premise as well as compliance with the mandatory criteria of evaluation used for official control. It is intended to "award" the smiley if 90% of the points evaluated are obtained.

The positive list

In the positive list, the veterinarian and food control office of Pankow publishes a list of enterprises, whose owners are participating in the smiley system and obtain at least 90% of the points at evaluation.

The negative list

In the negative list, the above authority publishes the names of enterprises, which, have committed offences against food and feed law, and, therefore, the applicable legislation of the European Union. The information published contains the facts of the offence. This means that the severity of the failure is obvious to the public. Smaller offences are not published. This list was made public for the first time during a press conference on Monday, the 2. March 2009.

Source: <http://www.berlin.de/ba-pankow/verwaltung/ordnung/smiley.html>

Smiley Project in Saxonia

The above has existed in Zwickau (Saxonia) since 2007, (hygiene passport Zwickau). In this scheme non-compliant premises are also listed on the Internet, which is updated every two weeks. Participation in Zwickau as with Pankow is voluntary, at present there are over 300 participants and more now wish to join.

This hygiene passport system should be an additional incentive for cleaning food premises. "The hygiene passport Zwickau" is based on a system of bonus points, the food-control authority of Zwickau records the effectiveness of overall consumer protection methods of the enterprise when it is inspected. Completing a notice during the inspection in the premises then creates a document. The result of the current official inspection is then recorded the official controller. If they are successful the food business operators can then receive a "hygiene passport" which comprises:

- a written contract between the food business operator and the district Zwickau
- the food business operator commits to display the notice and pays a one off participation fee of 15 €); (covering material costs).
- the notice board remains the property of the official authority and can be withdrawn if standards are not maintained.

At each official control, hygiene points (max. 5), in the form of a sticker, are given or withdrawn according to performance, thus reflecting accurately the current conditions of the level of hygiene. The date of the inspection and the signature of the controller are noted on the control document. Each inspection can either lead to upgrading or devaluation. Hence consumers are always informed about the current hygiene level in the respective premises. The crucial goal is not having everyone receiving the full score, but that

the food business operators are participating in the system and displaying publicly their readiness to adhere to food and hygiene regulations. The participants in "the Zwickauer hygiene passport" are published on the Internet.

Internet: www.zwickau.de/de/hygienePASS/teilnehmer.php

Smiley project in North Rhine-Westphalia

Since the autumn of 2006, 9 districts and cities North Rhine-Westphalia, have used the quality seal "smiley". It has been awarded to taverns, restaurants and Cafés, which scored well during food inspections. The project runs on the "freiwilliger" basis. The above was created to deal with the high failure rate, 19% (each 5th premises), of catering establishments, which failed to achieve the required hygiene standards. In the Oberberg district the project was extended, in March 2009, to crafts enterprises such as baker's and butcher's shops. It is not intended to create a "smiley" programme for premises, which deal with food processing, for instance slaughterhouses or supermarkets. At present approx. 250 smileys have been awarded. It appears that the Lands, Saarland and Baden-Württemberg, are also thinking about the introduction of a smiley system.

Smiley project in Belgium

The Belgium smiley concept was created in 2007 after an agreement between specialists, the consumer federations and citizens organisations. In order to be awarded the smiley each food premises in Belgium must apply to the responsible authority, which then assigns (at the expenses of the requesting premise) an accredited Institute (comparable in Germany with private experts) to carry out an audit of the premises. This auditing organisation must be accredited by BELAC (Belgian organisation for accreditation) and by FASNK (specialist authority for food control). The audits examine the measures, which the relevant enterprise has introduced, with regard to food safety.

The appropriate professional associations provide manuals, which give guidance for self-controls to the industry. These again must be approved by FASNK. Self-controls refer to the entire package of measures, taken by the food premises operator, in order to guarantee that the business complies with regulations on product safety, quality and tractability, the information from these audits is then combined with the official inspection results of the responsible authority. The classification awarded within the smiley system is arrived at by reference to these two results. This system has only, so far, been used in the Belgium catering industry but it is to be expanded into all ranges.

Internet: http://www.favv.be/smiley/index_nl.html

Smiley project in Denmark

In Denmark the veterinary and food authority provides consumers with easily understandable information about food safety by using the smiley. The above-mentioned Danish authorities, "Fødevarestyrelsen", are the responsibility of the Ministry for family and consumer affairs. Since October the 1st 2001 Denmark has used a label system for all commercial food businesses. This project is based on their food law ("Lov om fødevarer"). All 46,000 food retailers display a symbol, which, at a glance, gives consumers a clear understanding of the general food safety of the premise.

In Denmark, they have decided for themselves how they will use the so-called "smiley symbols". All grocers' shops, restaurants and snacks bars must display the "smiley symbol" and the relevant inspection report. The evaluation of retailers and restaurants are also published on the Internet. An Internet search for e.g. "Aldi" in February 2006, showed the evaluations of 237 Danish Aldi super-markets. 191 of these had a laughing smiley, 39 a smiling smiley, three a bad tempered smiley and four had a dissatisfied smiley.

On the Internet site, you can also view the last four control reports of food processing plants, - manufacturers and - retailers. Anyone interested in this can also subscribe to official food warnings on the Internet. Any product of concern will be named with its exact designation, its manufacturer as well as the processing period and/or batch number if necessary. A survey, carried out by the Danish food authority, showed 79 per cent of Danes would not visit a restaurant if they knew that it had a bad smiley. The same inquiry stated that 56 per cent of Danes would leave a restaurant, after having entered, if they discovered it had a bad smiley. The authority website registers about 1,000 accesses per day to view the test reports. It is, therefore, one of the most frequently visited Danish websites.

Source: www.foodwatch.de



Members of the E.W.F.C.

Belgium



Association Belge pour les Contrôles Alimentaires – ABCA BVEC
Belgische Vereniging voor de EetwarenControle

Germany



Bundesverband der Lebensmittelkontrolleure e.V. – BVLK



BLC
Bundesverband der Lebensmittelchemiker/-innen
im öffentlichen Dienst e.V.

Bundesverband der Lebensmittelchemiker/-innen
im öffentlichen Dienst – BLC

Bundesverband der Fleischkontrolleure

France



Association Française des Techniciens des Services des Contrôles Alimentaires – AFTCA

Great Britain



Association of Meat Inspectors GB Ltd

Luxemburg



Organisme pour la Sécurité et la Qualité de la Chaîne alimentaire – OSQCA

Netherlands



College van Keurmeesters

Austria



V.O.L.K. - Verband der Österreichischen Lebensmittelaufsicht und des Konsumentenschutzes

Sweden



**YRKESFÖRENINGEN
MILJÖ OCH HÄLSA**
The Swedish Association of Environmental Health Professionals

The Swedish Association of Environmental Health Professionals

Cyprus



Association of Public Health Inspectors

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