

Focusing on the future direction of our major policies, 2007 saw the publication of long-term strategy papers for three policy areas – public health, consumer policy and animal health and welfare. Building on this work, 2008 will concentrate on delivering these new directions and maximising the benefit from existing legislation.

The figure below shows the ultimate objectives of the Health and Consumer Protection DG for meeting citizens' objectives regarding health and consumer protection.

With this in mind, a flexible and quick approach needs to be further developed in 2008 for tackling emergencies and ensuring business continuity.

This means taking an innovative but consistent line of attack based on robust information and assessment. Crucially, communication with citizens and industry should be improved during the year, taking stakeholder opinions into account and explaining why choices have been made and how greater cooperation can help build a shared vision for action.

How does the Health and Consumer Protection DG aim to meet citizens' expectations? The general objectives of the 2008 AMP are the following

Making Europe's citizens healthier, safer and more confident		
Consumer policy	Public health	Food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health
Increase consumer welfare through greater empowerment and effective protection	Protect and improve human health	Ensure food is safe and wholesome Ensure a high level of animal and plant health protection

IMPLEMENTING THE 2007 STRATEGY PLANS

How are the objectives contained in the three strategy papers for consumer policy, public health and animal health and welfare to be pursued in 2008?

First, **early warning and crisis preparedness** is needed, to enable us to tackle emergencies effectively and guarantee that unsafe products are rapidly withdrawn from the market. Building on previous work on how to deal with a pandemic, preparedness will be strengthened and action reinforced in areas such as planning and coordination. **Rapid alert systems** will be deployed and developed to monitor and inform on the remedial action taken. In all work on emergency preparedness, **sustainable and flexible business continuity** should be guaranteed, for both low-level and serious events.

Better regulation will again be a focus of action in 2008, in particular designing rules that are easier to implement and keep up to date. Robust risk assessment and scientific knowledge on which to base regulations will be part of this action.

Further work will be undertaken on these issues with the regulatory agencies, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the three 'non-food' Scientific Committees.

Effective implementation and enforcement of existing legislation are vital, not simply for avoiding health scares and international frictions but also for ensuring a high level of product safety and consumer confidence. This goal will be sought through:

- more efficient governance and enforcement networks across Europe
- the Food and Veterinary Office's (FVO) audits and inspections
- close cooperation with Member States.

To maximise the benefit of our policies to citizens, such policies must be coherent not only with each other but also with other EU policies.

Efforts will therefore be made to integrate the health, consumer protection and animal welfare dimensions when formulating and implementing other EU policies and look for interfaces with other issues of interest.

Good governance will remain central to our work in 2008. Participation with stakeholders will be boosted and the recently created Stakeholder Dialogue Group, which advises on further improvements to our processes, will play a crucial role in this action.

Looking further into the future, short- and long-term **planning tools** will be developed. Building on the successful introduction of Unit Management Plans in 2007, the tools for planning and delivery of our initiatives and for identifying longer-term trends will be streamlined. Finally focus will continue to be given to the timely treatment of **Parliamentary Questions and other questions and correspondence** including those from citizens.



WHO'S WHO?

Androulla Vassiliou European Commissioner for Health	Meglana Kuneva European Commissioner for Consumer Policy
Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection	
European Food Safety Authority	EFSA provides independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks, as part of the EU's risk assessments regarding food and feed safety
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	The ECDC aims to strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases
Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO)	CPVO implements and applies the scheme for the protection of intellectual property rights on plant variety that has been established by Community legislation
Stakeholder Dialogue Group	The group advises the Health and Consumer Protection DG and the European Commission on process issues that will facilitate stakeholder involvement in their work
Regulatory Committees	Regulatory Committees assist the European Commission in the development of policy measures. They play a key role in the EU decision-making process as Committee members are representatives of EU Member States
Advisory Groups	These groups bring together key stakeholders to advise the European Commission on policy
Scientific Committees	Composed of independent scientists, these committees provide scientific advice to the European Commission
Executive Agency for Public Health	Responsible for the administrative implementation (with guidance of the Commission services) of the Public Health Programme

INTERESTED IN KNOWING MORE?

Health and Consumer Protection DG	http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
Full text of the Annual Management Plan (public part)	http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/annual_management_plan_en.htm
Consumer policy strategy 2007-13	http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/index_en.htm
Health programme 2008-13	http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/pgm2008_2013_en.htm
Animal health strategy 2007-13	http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/index_en.htm
EU Health portal	http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/index_en.htm
EFSA	http://www.efsa.europa.eu
ECDC	http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/
Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO)	http://www.cpvo.eu.int
FVO	http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.htm
Rapid alert system for non-food consumer products (RAPEX)	http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)	http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm
Stakeholder Dialogue Group	http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/sdg/index_en.htm



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Directorate-General Health and Consumer Protection Annual Management Plan 2008

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?



CONSUMER POLICY

In 2008 the Health and Consumer Protection DG will seek to further increase consumer welfare through greater empowerment and effective protection by pursuing the following specific objectives:

- boosting consumer confidence and consumer rights •
- facilitating/enhancing the potential of the internal market •
- strengthening Member States' enforcement of consumer protection rules •

An important step in 2008 is the adoption of the **proposal for a Framework Directive on consumer contractual rights**. In this way, common features of the consumer acquis will be systematised and regulated uniformly. Moreover, the regulatory framework will be rationalised and all the relevant provisions of existing directives will be systematised into new legislation. Business and consumers will also benefit from a more predictable regulatory framework.

Another output for 2008 will be a **consumer scoreboard** to develop information about the consumer outcome of the internal market. Indicators will be developed on the functioning of the internal market from a consumer perspective and the market will continue to be monitored.

Regarding product safety, **product-specific safety requirements** on for example toys and cosmetics will be enhanced. In addition, a knowledge base and strategy will be constructed, proposing targeted measures where potential risks to consumers are identified. Cooperation at international level will remain an effective tool to deal with safety hazards of products at the source.

Enforcement of existing consumer legislation will be a key instrument to improve the market environment for consumers. In 2008 work in the form of consultations, studies and focus groups will continue to create more effective tools for **consumer redress**.



PUBLIC HEALTH

Work in 2008 will continue to complement and add value to Member States' actions by undertaking the specific objectives below:

- fostering good health in an ageing Europe •
- protecting citizens against health threats •
- supporting dynamic health systems and use of new technologies in the Member States and regions •

With these aims in mind, work will be undertaken towards increasing citizens' **healthy life expectancy** by undertaking actions from the EU strategy "Together for Health", launched in 2007. Actions that seek to reduce inequalities in healthcare and health status between regions and create healthy conditions will also help to boost the number of citizens' healthy life years. Crucially and in light of the potentially widespread effect of health policy, the strategy aims to integrate health in all EU policies and strengthen the EU's voice in global health. As such, a significant goal for 2008 will be to foster good health in an ageing Europe. In particular, Member States' actions will be complemented in **decreasing wide health inequalities**, focusing on key **health determinants** such as nutrition and mental health issues.

Organ donation and transplantation and rare diseases are particularly high up the agenda for 2008: a Directive on the former issue will be formulated together with an action plan for closer cooperation between Member States, while a Commission Communication on European action in rare diseases will be produced.

To protect citizens from health threats, work will be undertaken with Member States on scientific risk assessment and preparedness and response to epidemics and bioterrorism. **Collaboration between national health-care systems** will be boosted through such measures as supporting sharing of expertise.

Specific outputs to achieve these objectives include a Green Paper on **health professionals** in Europe; a Communication and Council Recommendation on **patient safety and quality of health services**; and a Council Recommendation on **healthcare-associated infections**.

WORKING WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS

In an increasingly interlinked world, international relationships need to be strengthened to ensure that our objectives can be reached. It is aimed that third country institutions and stakeholders, notably NGOs and economic operators, are able to participate fairly and sufficiently in the debate and consultation on EU policies.

This objective will be pursued through three tactics.

1. **Multilateral rule-making** – for example proposals to collaborate and contribute actively in the Global Health Security Initiative will put forward.
2. **Bilateral relations** – work with the USA will continue to build towards a global network on consumer product safety and cooperation with major manufacturing countries, such as China, will be enhanced. The existing Memoranda of Understanding with the relevant authorities of these countries will be further reviewed to ensure effective cooperation.
3. **Training and technical cooperation** – technical assistance to developing countries will increase.

FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL HEALTH, ANIMAL WELFARE AND PLANT HEALTH

Taking a holistic approach to the food chain – from farm to fork – the following specific objectives will be pursued:

- effective management and application of standards and legal requirements •
- effective control of application •

The challenge for food safety in 2008 is to complete and improve the legislative framework and make it work more effectively. Focus will therefore be given to **enhancing the implementation of legislation and harmonising controls** by Member State competent authorities. With regard to specific issues, the implementing measures for the regulation on maximum residue levels of **pesticides** in food and feed will be adopted and the review of the placing on the market of plant protection products will be completed. The legislation on **food additives, flavourings, contaminants and food contact materials** will be managed, to facilitate harmonised implementation both for routine and emerging issues.

For animal health and welfare, a stronger preventive approach will be taken, strengthening existing measures. In particular, **the action plan on animal health** will be formulated and put in place, together with a legislative proposal on the identification of sheep. A key output for animal welfare will be the proposal for a **Council Regulation on the protection of animals at slaughter or killing**.

Efforts to protect the **safety of food derived from plants** and secure the health and quality status of plants and plant products in all Member States will be continued.

Crucial to the proper implementation of legislation in food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health is the work of the **Food and Veterinary Office (FVO)**. In 2008, the FVO is scheduled to undertake approximately 250 audits and inspections throughout the EU, candidate countries and third countries exporting to the EU.

Finally the **infrastructure for crisis preparedness** will be progressed, for which a legal proposal on implementing measures for the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is expected.

