

# OPENING SPEECH BY THE HON. JASON AZZOPARDI, MINISTER FOR FAIR COMPETITION, SMALL BUSINESS AND CONSUMERS AT THE MCCAAs SEMINAR- EMERGING RISKS FROM FOOD AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES – QAWRA – MONDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2012

Reference Number: PR 2304, Press Release Issue Date: Oct 22, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.

I have the honour to welcome you all to this event, which is the second one organized as part of a series of events aimed at increasing the synergies between the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) of which the Technical Regulations Division, is the official appointed contact point for the European Food Safety Authority in Malta.

It is one of my prerogatives to emphasize on the networking between the EFSA and other entities in the Member States involved in risk assessment, which is in my opinion, essential for the effectiveness of providing independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks.

Malta, through the Technical Regulations Division (MCCAA) has to date been very active in the areas covered by EFSA, especially within the Focal Point network. In order to have a properly functioning network of expertise in food risk assessment, it is pivotal to have an optimum collaboration between all the interested national entities, because it is within these different bodies that the true knowledge on any emerging risks and on local situations lays.

The aim of this seminar is to further strengthen this collaboration and also to provide the latest information on the methods used in emerging risks situations and on how such situations are to be adequately communicated, both between the entities involved and also ultimately to the consumer, which is an important aspect falling within my portfolio of responsibilities. Communication, especially where consumers are involved, is to be effective and most importantly coherent and coordinated.

It is crucial for Malta to have all the national experts actively working together and providing their contribution in the area of food safety, both nationally and also along with experts from other countries within Europe and also from all over the world. The outputs of these contributions will be the basis for any necessary actions which are to be taken in the areas of food and feed safety. This will ensure that the proposed outputs would be reflecting the real situation nationally and through out Europe.

Another added key benefit resulting from the collaboration of the experts and entities, includes the sharing of the burden of risk assessments, as well as an easy access to expertise not available within the specific department.

I would like to sincerely encourage you to take this opportunity which is being presented to you today, to think over the benefits of being a part of this network, both at a national level as well as on a personal level. This is a perfect chance to show that Maltese experts can not only contribute to the various areas under EFSA's remit, but can do so actively and in a positive manner. Moreover I would like to take this opportunity to thank the EFSA representative, Ms. Laura Smillie, for having accepted our invitation to attend this event.

Thank you for your attention.