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Synergy of Partnership: Food Safety in Turkey and EU

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1. INTRODUCTION

As is known, nutrition is one of the essential needs for all living to survive. There are microorganisms which can exist without air, but a living to survive without nutrition has not been encountered.

Nutrition is supplied via substances called food. Food is the general name for the physiologically necessary substances by means of oral intake of the living in order to sustain their lives, to develop and to reproduce. Food, for the most developed of the living, the human, is not only a physiological necessity but also carries aside social and psychological values.

The specific branch of the manufacturing sector that uses the input from the agriculture, livestock and fishing sectors and transforms them into ready to consume products after one or more treatments by extending its shelf life is called “the Food Industry”. The main function of the food industry is to enable sustainability of delivering to the food need by applying specific treatment and storage methods onto the agricultural products which tend to spoil fast.

Due to its important functions of processing agricultural products, producing added value, providing foreign currency entry into the country as well as creating employment and exports, the food industry is a strategic sector. No matter what the countries’ development levels are, they try to keep the possibilities to feed their citizens under their own initiatives.

2. FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SAFETY

Access to food and nutrition is a fundamental, indispensable and global right for human beings. Every human being should be able to reach healthy and safe food that is sufficient of quality and quantity that suits his/her believes and culture.

In our day and age when we look at the world it is not quite possible to say that access to food is righteous. Food is an indicator of “health-diet” in developed and “life-death” in underdeveloped countries. In the World Food Summit which was held in 1996, it was stated that access to food for anyone is a human right and a target was set to reduce at least half of 840 million hungry in the world by the year 2015.

By year 2006 the number of hungry in the world increased to 862 million people instead of a decline. The reason we would take the year 2006 into consideration is to draw attention to the negative developments after this date as far as reaching the targets. As to be remembered, 2007 was a year that affected the World Food Safety deeply where unprocessed food and oil prices skyrocketed. By the time the increase in food prices finally cooled off for a downward move, the global economic crisis broke out.

The global economic crisis carried a brand new problem in world food safety onto the agenda. The developed countries’ reduction in food expenditures would mean that their food imports from underdeveloped countries would also lessen. This situation means a halt in investments in these countries and an increase in poverty. Nevertheless, due to the “Food Crisis” the hungry in the world reached 75 million, after which another 105 million was added to this number in 2008 due to the Global Economic Crisis where the total number of hungry in the world reached 1 billion 40 million in the world.

The concepts of food security and food safety are often confused.

Food security can be defined as a natural right of humans to access food at an affordable price which is also healthy, adequate, nutritious and reliable.

Although the world’s existing possibilities are at a level to feed all its humans, hunger is increasing constantly. Global food security is facing its biggest problem in its near history. The fact that more

than a billion people most of who live in underdeveloped countries cannot find enough food for their basic nutritional needs can be described as “the shame of the developed world”.

The change in live styles by countries moving from agricultural to industrial societies has also affected their eating styles and their food intake started to differ.

With the pressure from the new life style, consumers gravitated toward ready-made food products and as a result production industries of a variety of ready made foods have developed. It is someone else now who prepares the prepackaged food, creating the conditions to store it for long periods, transporting the food to far places and doing the marketing and sales.

It is of great importance that the consumer knows what he is eating as well as supplying the consumer with healthy, honest food as well as satisfying his/her taste. This is where the “Food Safety” concept is born.

“Food Safety” can be defined as all provisions taken in order to eliminate physical, chemical, biologic and all other types of harmful from the food prepared for consumption. Primary production covers supply of healthy and reliable products from the farm to the table which not harmful to the environment and the human health by ensuring adequate control in each stage of its production process.

Today, in a globalizing world trade it is not possible to provide safe food limited to a geographical area. Nevertheless, even if the safety of local food is absolutely secured in one country, the possibility of products and humans changing continents within a few hours increases the dimensions of the existing risks by making them global. The difficulty associated with ensuring Food Safety becomes clear when the lack of consumer education, gaps in income levels as well as national problems like unregistered food production, known as production under the stairs, of the developing countries is added to the problem.

It is one of the main conditions and perhaps the most important one for a society and the people who make it up to be able to consume adequate, balanced and safe food in order to sustain a healthy and strong life, to develop economically and socially, to increase the welfare level and to continue this level in peace and security.

The mad cow disease, dioxane, melamine traces found in milk powder produced in China and the Sudan 1 dye are which took place in the recent past have caused mistrust among the consumers. This is the reason why furnishing food security and safety, protecting and developing health, prevention of food related diseases and protection of the environment have been taken as some of the “State’s Basic Duties”. In fact the Turkish Constitution’s Article 172 provides the basis for this duty by stating “the State takes measures to protect and clarify the consumers and supports initiatives by the consumers to protect themselves”.

The 28th Chapter of the Turkey-EU Accession Negotiations, namely “Protection of the Consumer and Health” was opened for negotiations on 9 December 2007. Today, the Turkish legislation has satisfactorily been aligned with the EU legislation under the title of protection of the consumer and health.

3. FOOD SAFETY IN TURKEY

3.1. FOOD SAFETY POLICY:

Building a complementary and efficient food inspection system under the idea of food safety from the farm to the table can enable the supply of reliable food to the consumers and the protection of consumer rights and health as well as avoiding unfair competition in the sector.

Under this framework, the basis is to consider the food safety fundamentals and principles in vegetable, meat and fishery products from the initial production as well as through all stages until consumption. Therefore, food safety strategy covers the entire process including the initial production stage “from the farm to the table”.

3.2. LEGISLATION:

Food legislation is the name for all laws, regulations and by-laws which are issued to protect the consumer and identify the qualifications of where food is produced, stored and sold.

The first applications in regard to food started with a few articles (Article 15, 99, 104 and 105) within the Municipalities Act of 1580 from year 1930. Thereafter within the same year a more comprehensive law packaged was released under the name of Public Hygiene Law of 1593, articles 181 through 199.

Based on the Public Hygiene Law, firstly Food Code of Practice in 1942 and then Food Products Hygiene in 1952 were issued. Until the enactment of the Decree Law No. 560 on 28 June 1995 which solely deals with regulations in regard to food, all the Turkish legislation was handled in coherence with this decree. Since that time, other legislative applications initiated by the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance can be listed as Law No. 224 on “Establishment of a Food Council and Duties of Local Health Units in regard to Food Hygiene” from 1961; “The Rules of Action on the Application of Food Control Services” from 1980 and the By-Law on the production, consumption and inspection of foods which also deals with non-hygiene establishments from year 1995.

Decree Law No. 560 which was issued on 28 June 1995 brought fundamental and structural changes onto food services. Due to this decree the chaos in food services was partially eliminated and the mandate to authorize and to inspect non-hygiene establishments was given to the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. Based on this decree which acted as a framework and under the mandate of the Ministry of Health Turkish Food Codex, Bylaw on Food Production, Consumption and Inspection and Bylaw on Production, Packaging, Consumption and Inspection of Drinkable Waters were issued, implemented and regular inspections were applied in all areas of each local health unit. Municipalities were cooperated in relevant areas. Decree Law 560 is a framework Act which was prepared to cover the entire food chain process from production to consumption. Relevant penal provisions were arranged with Law No. 4128.

“Law on Adoption of the Decree Law about the Production, Consumption and Inspection following an Amendment” of 5179 was published in the Official Gazette on 5 June 2004 in order to give the food sector a new direction in line with the European Union Acquis. By way of this amendment issues like establishment of a National Food Codex Commission, Risk Analysis, Formation of Scientific Committees, establishment of a National Food Assembly and Food Banking, crisis management and traceability have found their place in law.

Because of Municipality Act of 5392 issued a year later on 3 July 2005, Greater Municipalities Act of 5316 and Law of Provincial Special Administration, the Turkish Council of State has given the duty of “authorizing and inspecting non hygiene establishments” to municipalities. Relevantly, the number of institutions in charge of food safety was increased to three, namely, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior.

To this date 12 regulation based on the Decree Law of 560 and the Food Act of 5179 as well as 107 product notifications within the Turkish Food Codex were issued.

In developed countries, beside the “food safety” concept, “feed safety” has also found its place and relevant inspections and controls are run within this framework. In the case of Turkey, food and feed safety, veterinarian services and phytosanitary are arranged with 5 main laws and relevant legislative arrangements until the new law will be implemented on 13 December 2010. These are Law no 5179 on Accepting the Amending of the Decree Law on Production, Consumption and Inspection of Foods, Law no 3285 on

Animal Health and Surveillance, Feed Law No. 1734, Agricultural Combat and Quarantine Law No. 6968 and Law No. 1380 on Fishery Products.

Unfortunately, Law of 5179 has not been able to achieve its purpose that it began with and the ground for EU cohesion has not been met. Nonetheless, the EU has stated this fact clearly in its 2009 Progress Report on Turkey under Chapter 12 on “Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy” underlining the fact that Law No 5179 was inadequate and that “Turkey has accomplished limited progress regarding food safety in adopting and implementing the EU legislation into national laws. The key framework law in the accession negotiations under this chapter in regard to food, veterinary, feed, hygiene and legal inspections has not yet been accepted.”

3.3. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE:

Until recently, 3 ministries have played roles in sustaining Food Security in Turkey. They are:

- a) The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
- b) The Ministry of Health
- c) The Ministry of Interior

Law No 5996 on Veterinary Services, Phytosanitary, Food and Feed which was published in the Official Gazette No 27610 on 13 June 2010 has ended this multiple-players type of management style and article 45 of the new law appointed the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs as the sole authorized body.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (TKB), in its central office hosts 5 General Directorates. The General Directorate for Protection and Control (KKGM) is the authorized unit for food and feed safety, fishery produce, veterinary and phytosanitary. KKGM is the contact point for international institutions in the area of food safety.

As regional structures of the TKB, there are Agricultural Provincial Directorates on the provincial level and Agricultural District Directorates on the district level. Nationwide the legal inspection and control services are being run with 1200 staff in 40 provincial control laboratories and 4535 food inspectors in the 81 Agricultural Provincial Directorates. Besides the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, 49 Private Food Control Laboratories which received special permits from the Ministry for operation support the control activities.

4. FOOD SAFETY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

The European Union was first established in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome under the name of European Economic Community. Today the six members in the beginning reached 27 and Turkey, Croatia and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) are waiting in line as candidate members. According to the recent statistics from Eurostat as of beginning of year 2010, the population of European Union with its 27 members is 501 million 62 thousand and it covers 3.5 million square meters in land.

Entry into the EU causes significant changes in their legal and economic systems for all new member states in the beginning. Member states have gone and gradually been going through several transformations from partial adoption of the detailed EU Acquis in the area of food legislation to direct control of food safety issues in private companies as well as a transition to a stronger and more flexible and guiding food legislation in a global free market economy.

It is a reality that adoption of EU legislation brings heavy burdens on the member states. According to a survey, adoption of the EU legislation brought a 185 billion dollars cost to England.

4.1. BASIC PRINCIPLES:

Food safety legislation developed in the context of forming an internal market as one of the main pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAM), by reflecting a mix of the Union's scientific, social, political and economic powers; it has gone through an obvious renewal period since year 2000.

Its basic principles can be summarized as:

- Maintaining highest level of protection of human health and consumer rights in all areas related to food,
- Furnishing effective functioning of the internal market.

4.2. LEGISLATION:

Even though free movement of goods in the common market is foreseen in article 3 of the Treaty of Rome, the first step of the free movement of food was taken in 1970 when differences among member states' labeling of some produce arose.

Following relevant four directives and the general Food Hygiene Directive (Council Directive of 93/43/EEC) food hygiene in animal produce has been renewed since 2002. Until this date, it would be appropriate to mention 1997 Green Paper (General Principles of the Food Act and Comprehensive Consultations with Stakeholders) and the White Paper published on 12 January 2000 which covered food safety.

Dangers that happened in the last 20 years like the BSE (mad cow disease) in cattle, dioxin in poultry, genetically modified organisms (GMO's), zoonosis (salmonella, lysteria etc.), pesticide remains, allergens, veterinarian pharmaceutical residue, use of growth enhancing antibiotics and hormones in animal herding has shaken the trust of the consumers and speeded up the process of new regulation in relation to food safety.

A change in the general approach to the topic in addition to the change in laws has taken place and basic responsibilities have been assigned.

The new approach is a chain of food production from the farm to the fork and holds many shareholders. The dangers in food could take place in any part of this chain. This is why all processes should be controlled. This requires a systematic approach. The real and private persons who are in any part of the primary consumption (plant, animal and fishery produce) and secondary production (food and feed factories) are responsible for their products they sell to comply with the provisions of the national food legislation.

Their basic responsibility can be listed as safe food, responsibility, monitorability, transparency, emergency situations- crisis management, preventive activities and cooperation with legal authorities.

The new EU Food legislation is shaped and member states' cohesion with it has mainly finished. Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the general principles and requirements of food law and establishing the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) lays down common procedures and explanations of the Union's food and feed laws. Since 1 January 2005 it has been implemented as binding in all member states.

The goal of Regulation (EC) 178/2002, general legislation on food can be described as;

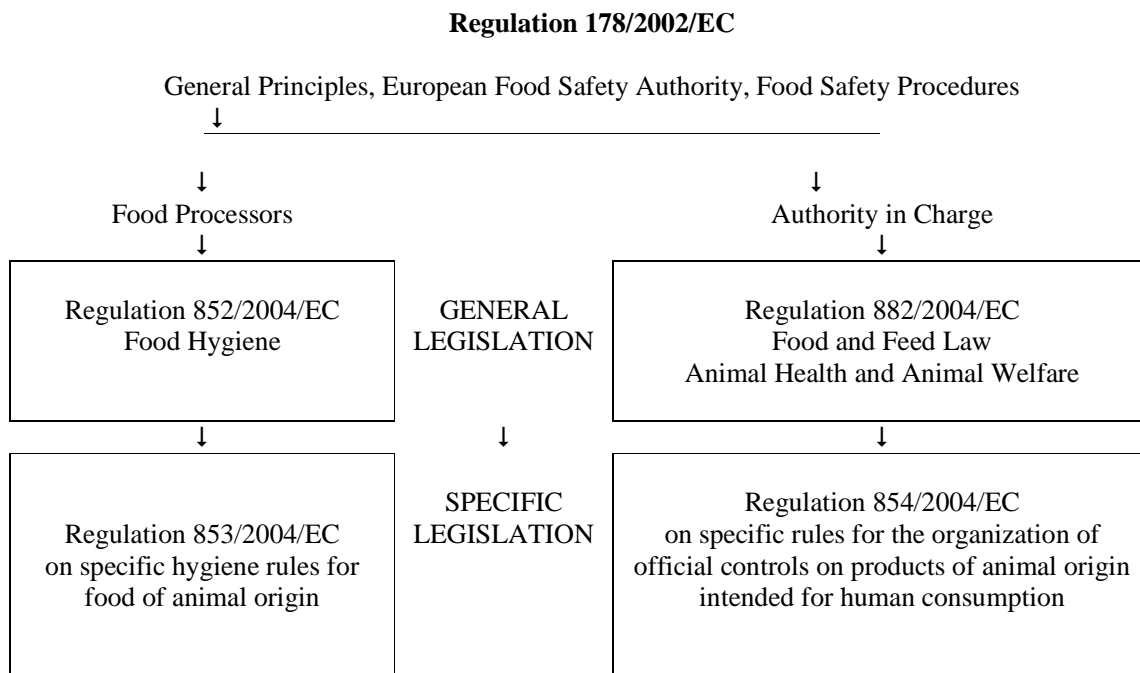
- to protect human health and consumers at the highest level,
- to protect consumers' rights including the trade of fair food produce,
- to allow for free movement of food and feed in the EU.

Under the umbrella Legislation of 178/2008/EC lay the following;

- 1) For Food Enterprises:
 - a) Regulation 852/2004/EC on general rules of hygiene for all foodstuffs and feed
 - b) Regulation 853/2004/EC on laying down specific rules of hygiene for processed food of animal origin
- 2) For The Authority in Charge:
 - a) Regulation 882/2004/EC on official controls performed to verify compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules,
 - b) Regulation 854/2004/EC on identifying specific rules in relation to the organization of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption
- 3) Regulation 2004/41/EC repealing certain directives concerning food hygiene and health conditions for the production and placing on the market of certain products of animal origin intended for human consumption and amending Council Directives.

Food Safety and Certification

Figure 1. EU Food Legislation



Regulation 2004/41/EC

repealing certain directives concerning food hygiene and health conditions for the production and placing on the market of certain products of animal origin intended for human consumption

These are the main EU Food Safety Legislation principles, due to limited time secondary regulations will not be discussed here.

4.3. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE:

As mentioned earlier, the EU has 27 members. It is quite regular that there are valid and binding rules for the union as there are structural differences in member countries. The EU Food Legislation is implemented via the following instruments.

- **Directives of the European Parliament, Council or the Commission:** Implemented in all member countries, is binding and mandatory.
- **Council Directives:** Introduces mandatory instruments but offers flexibility in national applications in accordance with local laws.
- **Decisions:** Documents that are binding the sides that they mention.

EU Food legislation can be interpreted as horizontal and vertical.

- **Horizontal Legislation:** Can be applicable to all food and food groups, deals with one aspect of the law (hygiene, labeling etc.)
- **Vertical Legislation:** Deals with specific types of food (milk, juice, etc) and inspects and identifies standards for all aspects of these products (raw material, ingredients, processing, labeling etc.).
- **Application Models:** International Food Standards prepared as a guideline for managers in charge of food processing enterprises on EU and on national levels; like good agricultural practices (GAP), good veterinary practices (GVP), good manufacturing practices (GMP), good distribution practices (GDP), good hygiene practices (GHP) and good trade practices (GTP).
- **CEN and ISO Standards:** EN ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System, EN ISO 22005 traceability in the feed and food chains, EN ISO/IEC 17025 for setting standard on the qualification of laboratories in experimenting and calibration, EN ISO 9001 Quality Management System Procedures etc. These are voluntary legal tools which have been approved by third parties and can be applied by the managers in charge of food processing businesses.
- **Special Standards:** Special standards are a subject of the consumer and supplier relationship. For example the BRC Global Standard holds special conditions identified by some retailers who have proven the responsibilities of specially labeled products.

The European Union by establishing the 178/200/EC Regulation of General Food Act by establishing the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) made arrangements in protecting human health and consumer rights in relation to food. Due to this arrangement in order to conduct risk assessments for the protection of human health and ensuring of food safety as well as providing with the necessary scientific proposals, in order to separate risk assessment and risk analysis EFSA was established as an independent council. The Council presents its position and decisions to the European Commission's Director General for Health and Consumer Protection.

Food inspections and controls are run by official authorities in member countries. In the 25 countries which have been examined, 56% have public authorities as the only institution, 96% have both public authorities and local administrations and 4% have local administrations as the only authority in charge.

As for the units which are responsible for inspections, the food authority had 63%, the ministries had 26% and the food authority and the ministry together had a 10% share.

Following table shows relevant units and authorities of each EU member country as well as National Food Safety system and their internal functioning.

Food Safety and Certification

Figure 2. Legal Inspection and Controls in EU Countries

COUNTRY	Public Authority in Charge of Food Safety	Authority	Public Inspection	Local Administration Inspection
1 UK	Ministry of Health	Food Standards Agency-EFSA	X	X
2 GERMANY (Federal)	1. Ministry of Health 2. Ministry for Environment and the Protection Wild Life and Nuclear Safety 3. Ministry for Food, Agriculture and the Protection of the Consumer	Federal Institute for Risk Assessment-BFR and Federal Office for the Protection of Consumer and Food Safety-BVL	X	X
3 FRANCE	1.Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 2. Ministry of Health 3. Ministry of Economy	French Food Safety Institution (Risk Assessment)	X	
4 NETHERLANDS	Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	Food and Consumer Products Safety Authority-VVM	X	
5 BELGIUM	Ministry of Public Health	Federal Agency for Food Safety	X	
6 GREECE	Ministry for Consumer Protection, Agriculture and Food	Food Safety Authority	X	X
7 ITALY	Ministry of Health	National Public Technical and Scientific Organ for Health Services (ISS)	X	X
8 SPAIN	1. Ministry for Health and Consumer 2. Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 3. Ministry of Environment	Food Safety Agency-AESA		X
9 PORTUGAL	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2. Ministry of Health 3. Ministry of Economy	Food Safety Agency	X	
10 IRELAND	1. Health 2. Environment 3. Agriculture 4. Maritime Units, 5. Local Authorities/Health Councils	Ireland Food Safety Authority	X	X
11 SWEEDEN	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2. Ministry of Interior	National Food Authority (Under Ministry of Agriculture)	X	X

12	FINLAND	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests	National Food Institution	X	X
13	AUSTRIA	Federal Ministry of Women and Health	Health and Food Safety Agency	X	X
14	DENMARK	Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs	Denmark Food and Veterinary Institution	X	
15	CHECK REP.	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2. Ministry of Health 3. Regional Veterinary Institution	Food Safety Agency (Under Ministry of Agriculture)	X	X
16	POLAND	1. Ministry of Health 2. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 3. Ministry of Competition and the Protection of Consumer		X	
17	HUNGARY	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 2. Ministry of Health 3. Ministry of Labour and Labour Force	Hungarian Food Safety Office	X	
18	SLOVAKIA		Food and Veterinary Directorate	X	
19	SLOVENIA	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2. Ministry of Health		X	
20	ESTONIA	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2. Ministry of Social Affairs 3. Ministry of Economic Affairs	Food and Veterinary Council		
21	LETONIA			X	
22	LITHUANIA	Ministry of Agriculture	State Agency of Food and Veterinary Services	X	
23	MALTA		Food Safety Commission	X	
24	GRNC		Ministry for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	X	X
25	BULGARIA	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2. Ministry of Health	Food Safety Authority	X	

5. SYNERGY BEFORE COOPERATION

The EU Acquis which consists of 35 chapters deals with all areas of the EU's legal system, institutions and rules in application. These are composed of the founding treaty of the EU and the amending treaties, secondary legislation, agreements made with third countries and the decisions taken by the European Court of Justice. Negotiation process is a process where each candidate country's duration of the adoption to the EU Acquis and its effective implementation is identified. The candidate country is obliged to establish the necessary institutional structure for adoption and implementation of the entire Acquis.

The only item to be negotiated is the implementation agenda.

Accession negotiations are being conducted in two phases. The first phase is called SCREENING and will be ended when compliance with opening criterion takes place; following the assessment by the

Council negotiation process starts. When the closing criterion is met at the negotiation process a temporary closure of that particular chapter takes place following an assessment of the Council.

Relevant Acquis about food safety is under Chapter 12 and is titled “Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policies”.

As Turkey plies for full membership to the EU with all its institutions, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs which is responsible for food safety also works in a high tempo keeping its communication to the relevant EU institutions alive by benefiting from the synergy that has been created.

It has been mentioned before that in Turkey until recently the areas of food safety, veterinary services, Phytosanitary and feed have been regulated with five main laws and relevant bylaws.

For the transposition of the EU Acquis, Turkey had met five out of the six opening criteria under Chapter 12 of “Food Safety, Veterinary Services and Phytosanitary” however had not yet developed a “Food, Feed and Veterinarian Framework Legislation” in line with the EU Acquis. “Framework law on food, veterinaries, feed, hygiene and legal inspections” which was mentioned in the accession negotiations under this chapter was accepted as a must.

All the efforts in this area which have been continued since year 2006 have finally been completed and Law No. 5996 on “Veterinary Services, Phytosanitary, Food and Feed Health” was accepted by the Turkish Parliament (TBMM) on 11.06.2010 and was published in the Official Gazette on 13.06.2010 thereafter entering into force.

The law is constituted of 50 articles and one temporary article; the first part is dedicated to “animal health, animal welfare, zootechnics, veterinarian health products and phytosanitary” whereas the remaining parts cover food safety, feed and hygiene.

This concludes the fulfillment of the last opening criteria for completing Chapter 12, of which 5 were already completed. On its last day of the EU Presidency, Spain has broken the tradition of EU bureaucracy which is know to function slowly, by announcing that this chapter would open on 30 June 2010 and the chapter did open.

After the opening of chapter 12, Turkey has reached 13 chapters in which accession negotiations between Turkey and EU are continuing.

In line with accession to the EU, another important step was taken this year and Law No. 5977 of Biosecurity which deals with genetically modified organisms has entered into force.

Besides the legislation in sustaining food safety, the institutional structure will play an active role in implementing this legislation. There is a draft Law on “Ministry of Agriculture and Food’s Structure and Activities” awaiting in the Turkish Parliament (TBMM) to be put into force soon which deals with the reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs where its name will also be changed to the “Ministry Of Agriculture and Food”.

Activities within the last year can be summarized as follows:

- a) The Seed Law No. 5553 has entered into force.
- b) Law No. 5042 on Protection of Breeders’ Rights for New Plant Varieties has entered into force.
- c) Along with inspections and controls, in securing food hygiene which make up a major part of food safety reliable and hygienic production in line with the Food Codex is provided and improvement of food producing businesses’ technical and hygienic norms is intended.

- d) In line with EU countries' practices, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has prepared a "Procedure to Identify Risk Based Inspection Frequency for Enterprises" which was implemented by the 81 Agricultural Provincial Directorates.
- e) Product based risk inspection and monitoring programme capacities in addition to risk based inspections in protecting the consumer were expanded. In year 2009, pesticide residue in 47 products in 17 product classes as well as labeling inspection and control programmes for 12 different product classes were implemented.
- f) The National Food Reference Laboratory which was financed during a project funded by the EU will be opened these days.
- g) Several EU-supported Projects and Training Activities were realized. Some of these are as follows:
- The EU Project (TR 04 IB AG 02) titled "Restructuring and Strengthening of the Food Safety and Control System in Turkey",
 - MATRA Project (G2G07/TR/8/15) on Alignment of Turkish Food Safety Inspections with the EU Food Safety Regulation and Standards,
 - SANCO "Better Training For Food Safety",
 - TAIEX "Regional Training for Food Safety",
 - EFSA Project on enabling the accession of Turkey to EFSA,
 - Enabling the food safety information system,
 - Implementation of rapid alarm system (RASFF) in food and feed,
 - Preparation of hygiene guidelines.

6. PUBLIC- CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION

The Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in an effort to reach all citizens from 7 to 70 years old, trying for the citizens to take active roles in the food inspection services and eliminating unfair competition and unregistered food production as well as informing the society about the Ministry's authority and activities about food safety has launched a campaign. The campaign was launched on 14 February 2009 with the slogan of "Safe Food Healthy Life" and lasted a yearlong with several activities.

On the same date a protocol was signed and the "174 Food Phone Line" was introduced which will take consumers' complaints and requests for information on food from anywhere in Turkey. Web-based software allows consumers' requests to be taken into consideration and the results can be accessed with an application number via calling the hot line or checking the www.alo174.gov.tr website. As of 13 July 2010, there have been 38.817 applications and 35.497 of them were replied since the launch date of 14 February 2009.

Civil society organizations and the public authorities have demonstrated good examples of cooperation in 2009 which was the "Food Safety Year". The Food Processing Industry Employers' Association of Turkey (TÜGİS) which I am the president of, has contributed to this campaign by funding the lyrics and composition for the music of the campaign, as well as providing finances for the 174 Food Phone Line.

Another activity was “The International First Food Safety Congress” in cooperation with the Food Safety Association which took place on December 4, 2009. The second of the congress will be held again this year on December 4th.

7. EPILOGUE

On the last day of the Spanish Presidency of the EU, on 30 June 2010 Turkey was able to get chapter 12 on “Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary” to be opened for negotiations therefore increasing the negotiations talks to 13 chapters.

In viewing the EU membership as a modernization project, Turkey is continuing its efforts and contacts in a systemized and intensive manner by trying to benefit from the synergy that has been created. The major issue for Turkey via the momentum by this process is to reach contemporary standards in all areas and to develop the citizens’ welfare level as well as enhancing their fundamental rights and freedoms.

I hope that the opening of the chapter on food safety will be landmark for some of our negative experiences in the past to vanish and for our citizens to fill their shopping baskets with complacency.

Turkey, due to its geographical position and its climate hosts the milieu for many different types of animals and allows thousands of vegetables and fruits to be grown by proving its significant added value for European Union countries.