



2026/1023

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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2026/1023

of 8 May 2026

establishing a programme for the exchange of staff of the competent authorities of the Member States with expertise in official controls on animals and goods entering the Union

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products, amending Regulations (EC) No 999/2001, (EC) No 396/2005, (EC) No 1069/2009, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) No 1151/2012, (EU) No 652/2014, (EU) 2016/429 and (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulations (EC) No 1/2005 and (EC) No 1099/2009 and Council Directives 98/58/EC, 1999/74/EC, 2007/43/EC, 2008/119/EC and 2008/120/EC, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 854/2004 and (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 89/608/EEC, 89/662/EEC, 90/425/EEC, 91/496/EEC, 96/23/EC, 96/93/EC and 97/78/EC and Council Decision 92/438/EEC (Official Controls Regulation) ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 130(6) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EU) 2017/625 provides for a comprehensive framework for official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of Union agri-food chain law.
- (2) Official controls on animals and goods entering the Union are a key element in ensuring a high level of protection of human, animal and plant health, animal welfare and the environment, as well as the smooth functioning of the internal market.
- (3) The number of consignments of animals and goods entering the Union through border control posts has increased, while the competent authorities responsible for official controls and other official activities operate with limited resources. To ensure a high level of food safety and protection of human, animal and plant health, animal welfare and the environment, it is necessary to enhance the efficiency of those activities, including by optimising working methods and risk-based approaches, thus allowing more consignments to be checked with the same resources. A programme for the exchange of staff between competent authorities is an efficient means to promote mutual learning and the dissemination of best practices and practical solutions across the Union.
- (4) It is therefore appropriate to establish a programme for the exchange of staff of the competent authorities responsible for the organisation of official controls and other official activities on animals and goods entering the Union ('the Programme'), in order to increase the consistency and efficiency of such controls and activities at border control posts by enhancing cooperation between competent authorities and facilitating the identification of common challenges and best practices in organising those controls and activities.
- (5) Participants in the Programme should report to the Commission on their findings and experience from those activities. Such reports should provide evidence-based and operational observations regarding common challenges and good practices of the competent authorities. They should also contribute to the development of guidance and, where appropriate, to the preparation of follow-up measures aimed at strengthening the cooperation between the Commission and competent authorities and at improving the consistent application of official controls to ensure compliance with Union rules on food and feed, animal health and welfare, and plant health.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj>.

- (6) In order to ensure the effective and transparent implementation of the Programme, it is necessary to lay down rules on its organisation and financing, the conditions for participation, and the roles and responsibilities of the participating national experts, the Member States and the Commission.
- (7) To ensure mutual trust and effective cooperation between competent authorities and to ensure that the participants in the Programme can have access to the necessary information, rules on the disclosure of information acquired during their participation in the Programme should be laid down.
- (8) In order to ensure proportionate use of resources, it is appropriate to lay down a period for the application of this Decision. The Programme should operate for a period of three years, since that is sufficient to achieve its objectives.
- (9) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Establishment and objectives of a programme for the exchange of staff

1. A programme for the exchange of staff of competent authorities responsible for the organisation of official controls and other official activities on animals and goods entering the Union ('the Programme') is established.
2. The purpose of the Programme is to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experience and best practices among the competent authorities of the Member States responsible for the organisation of official controls and other official activities on animals and goods entering the Union.
3. The Programme shall pursue the following objectives:
 - (a) supporting the efficiency and consistency of official controls on animals and goods entering the Union;
 - (b) strengthening the cooperation between the Commission and the competent authorities of the Member States in the area of official controls and other official activities on animals and goods entering the Union;
 - (c) contributing to the elaboration and dissemination of practical solutions for the improvement of official controls on animals and goods entering the Union.

Article 2

Activities of the Programme

The activities of the Programme shall include in particular the following:

- (a) short-term secondments of national experts to the competent authorities of other Member States responsible for official controls and other official activities on animals and goods entering the Union;
- (b) collaborative visits of national experts to border control posts and other relevant sites;
- (c) the provision of specialised expertise, peer support and advice related to the organisation and performance of official controls, including solution-oriented dialogue and facilitating the exchange of knowledge necessary for the consistent implementation of official controls;
- (d) reports to the Commission on the findings from the activities referred to in points (a), (b) and (c), with the aim of identifying common challenges, documenting good practices, and contributing to the development and dissemination of practical solutions that enhance the quality and efficiency of official controls;
- (e) meetings related to the activities of the Programme.

*Article 3***Establishment of an Expert Pool and membership**

1. A European Union expert pool on import controls ('the Expert Pool') is established as the operational body of the Programme.
2. The Commission shall request Member States to propose a list of qualified national experts to participate in the Programme as members of the Expert Pool. The national experts shall be civil servants or employees of the competent authorities of the Member States responsible for official controls and other official activities on animals and goods entering the Union at border control posts, and shall have the requisite expertise in official controls and other official activities, in particular in the areas of animal health, plant health or food safety.
3. The Commission shall assess the proposals and appoint the members of the Expert Pool based on their qualifications and experience in the relevant areas of expertise.

*Article 4***Organisation of the Expert Pool**

1. The Expert Pool shall be managed and coordinated by the Commission. The Commission shall ensure that the Expert Pool contributes to the objectives of the Programme, by preparing and managing the schedule of activities, including meetings of the Expert Pool, and by defining the content and specific focus of each such activity.
2. Member States shall, in accordance with national arrangements, facilitate the participation of members of the Expert Pool in activities of the Programme and shall cooperate with the Commission and other Member States in organising and conducting collaborative visits and on-site activities.

*Article 5***Obligations of the members of the Expert Pool**

Members of the Expert Pool shall:

- (a) be available at short notice to participate in activities of the Programme;
- (b) comply with the obligation of professional secrecy regarding information acquired during their participation in activities of the Programme.

*Article 6***Termination of membership of the Expert Pool**

The Commission may terminate membership of the Expert Pool in any of the following cases:

- (a) members no longer fulfil the requirements laid down in Article 3(2), second sentence;
- (b) members fail to comply with the obligations laid down in Article 5;
- (c) members wish to resign from the Expert Pool.

*Article 7***Indemnity**

1. Members of the Expert Pool shall be entitled to an indemnity for their participation in activities of the Programme, including meetings of the Expert Pool, as provided for in the Annex.
2. Members of the Expert Pool shall be non-remunerated experts within the meaning of Article 243 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾.
3. The Commission may adjust the indemnity referred to in paragraph 1.

*Article 8***Travel and subsistence expenses**

Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by members of the Expert Pool for their participation in the activities of the Programme, including meetings of the Expert Pool, shall be reimbursed by the Commission in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission. Such expenses shall be reimbursed within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

*Article 9***Entry into force and application**

This Decision shall enter into force on the third day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Decision shall apply until 14 May 2029.

Done at Brussels, 8 May 2026.

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>).

ANNEX

Indemnity referred to in Article 7

Members of the Expert Pool shall be entitled to an indemnity as follows:

- (a) EUR 450 for each full day of participation in an activity of the Programme, including meetings of the Expert Pool;
 - (b) EUR 225 for each half day of participation in an activity of the Programme, including meetings of the Expert Pool.
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