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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides
on behalf of the European Commission
(10.9.2024)

The Commission is aware of fraud cases concerning food supplements as reported by the Honourable Member. In fact, more than 1,000 non-compliances on food supplements were reported by Member States' authorities within the EU Alert and Cooperation Network (ACN)¹ between January 2023 and July 2024, amongst which two-thirds were reported within the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed. Out of these, 78 cases relate to the presence of unauthorised substances (such as medicines, stimulants, and doping substances) and 392 to the detection of ingredients that are not authorised in the EU.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) performs comprehensive risk assessments on the safety of substances used in food supplements before any EU authorisation is granted. The presence of medicines, stimulants, and doping substances in food and of substances unauthorised as food ingredients, are in breach with EU legislation.

While the current EU legal framework is considered to be fit for purpose, its implementation and enforcement remain under the responsibility of the Member States. The Commission will continue assisting Member States in these responsibilities, notably through EU coordinated actions² and enhancing communication and cooperation through its ACN. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) also supports Member States in preventing and combating organised fraud in the sector³.

¹ https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/acn_en

² In 2017 the Commission launched the first EU coordinated control programme on online offered food products: https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/eu-agri-food-fraud-network/eu-coordinated-actions/online-offered-food-2017_en

³ E.g.: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/illicit-trafficking-in-hormonal-substances-and-other-growth-promoters>