

EN

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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(9.4.2026)

Under the Vision for Agriculture and Food¹, the Commission announced a dedicated EU Task Force to be established, which will pull expertise and forces from the Commission and Member States together to further strengthen the control on imports. The work of the Task Force on Import Controls² was launched at the ministerial meeting that took place in the margins of the 26 January 2026 AGRIFISH Council meeting³.

The first expert and working groups held under the Task Force took place on 24 February 2026 (on intensification of official controls of food and feed of non-animal origin⁴), on 4 March 2026 (on plant health) and on 18 March 2026 (on Veterinary Import Controls Legislation). A further meeting is scheduled for 15 April 2026 (on the Official Controls Regulation).

Conclusions along with potential recommendations for joint actions or, where appropriate, suggestions of specific regulatory measures, are expected for the second half of 2026. Implementation of these conclusions is foreseen to start in 2027.

It should be noted that the Task Force does not replace official controls performed by Member States or create parallel structures; it builds on existing expert and working groups, bringing them together in a more coordinated and strategic way.

Its added value lies in improving harmonised implementation across the EU, identifying gaps or inconsistencies, and proposing joint actions where an EU-level approach is most convenient.

Finally, the effective and consistent implementation of EU legislation across all Member States is ensured through on-site audits conducted by the Commission (Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety). The frequency of these audits in Member States will be increased by 33% for the 2026-2027 period.

¹ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en.

² Import controls of food and feed Q&As; Food Safety: https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/official-controls-and-enforcement/import-controls-food-and-feed-qas_en.

³ Agriculture and Fisheries Council: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/agrifish/2026/01/26/>.

⁴ ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/1793/oj.