

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



Consumer protection mission to Albania

Closer to EU standards: as part of the EU’s TAIEX expert mission, the BfR and the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) imparted knowledge on consumer health protection in Tirana in October 2019. With lectures and seminars, the BfR and the BVL contributed to boosting risk assessment, risk communication and risk management in Albania, aligning them with EU standards. Also included were BfR findings in crisis prevention and education as well as crisis communication and stakeholder management.

High-tech food safety in Montenegro

Digitalising food risk assessment – for this, Montenegro’s government is funding the establishment of a centre of excellence at the University of Donja Gorica. The BfR is supporting the establishment of a modern next-generation sequencing laboratory and the development of methods in the field of authenticity and providing advice on selecting suitable IT tools for risk assessment. The BfR also offers laboratory training courses in Montenegro and Berlin.

More food safety professionals

As a member of the European Food Safety Authority’s (EFSA) scientific advisory board, the BfR chairs the discussion group on capacity development in food risk assessment. The long-term goal of the group is to develop a European master’s degree programme in “Food Safety Risk Assessment”. International experts are currently developing the content and structure of the course.

PERSONNEL



Award-winning BfR research on tattoo inks

Dr. Ines Schreiber, head of the junior research group “Tattoos” at the BfR, has received the “Young Scientist Toxicology Award” for her work in the field of tattoo ink research. The prize along with 2,500 euros is awarded annually by the Society for Toxicology. It acknowledges the outstanding, independent contribution to scientific progress and Ms. Schreiber’s resulting scientifically high-level publications.

INTERNAL**New National Reference Laboratory at the BfR**

Food can be contaminated with pathogenic viruses. Pathogens that cause diarrhoea and hepatitis viruses play a role here. Since mid-December 2019, the BfR has been home to the National Reference Laboratory for Foodborne Viruses. It performs this role in accordance with Article 100 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625. The BfR develops detection methods and ensures monitoring quality, among other things.

Detection in food is often very laborious because of the often low concentration of the virus and the complex composition of food. Noroviruses and rotaviruses can cause gastrointestinal diseases and infections with hepatitis A and E viruses can lead to liver inflammation.

System assessment quality management mastered

The revised standard DIN EN ISO/IEC 17025:2018 places extended demands on the competence of testing laboratories, which have been integrated into the quality management system of the BfR laboratories. In February, this system was successfully assessed by the German Accreditation Body (DAkks). The BfR will receive an accreditation certificate that has been amended accordingly probably in the middle of the year, the appendix of which shows the flexibly accredited test areas and an excerpt of the accredited test procedures at the BfR. The BfR proves its special competence in these laboratory areas.

Award for best short lectures

Anne-Margarethe Enge and Marja Kornhuber have been recognised with the award of the German Society of Toxicology for the best short presentation. Both BfR scientists are sharing the award, which they received on 5 March 2020 at the "German Pharm-Tox Summit" in Leipzig. Enge researches pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) at the BfR. These are substances which are formed by some flowering plants, and which can be toxic. In her presentation, she presented a study which analysed the association between the intake and transportation of PAs, and the toxicity thereof. Kornhuber's research focuses on environmental chemicals and their influence on the endocrine system. Laboratory animals are still frequently needed in order to identify and characterise them. Kornhuber presented a new test method in her lecture. The Society of Toxicology is a member of the German Society of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology (DGPT). It meets once a year at the "German Pharm-Tox Summit".