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[Press release](#) | 11.02.2013

Horsemeat scandal

EU must take immediate action on food quality and labelling, and investigate fraud concerns

In response to the deepening and widening scandal surrounding the discovery of horse DNA in processed meat products in a number of EU member states, the Greens/EFA group is calling on the European Commission and relevant regulatory agencies to take action. The group is pushing for an emergency hearing of the European Parliament's environment committee with the relevant EU commissioners for food safety, Tonio Borg, and agriculture, Dacian Cioloș (1). The group has also highlighted questions to be urgently addressed by the EU's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and the EU's anti-fraud agency (OLAF).

Commenting on the scandal and the Greens/EFA initiative, Green public health spokesperson **Carl Schlyter** (MEP, Sweden) said:

"As the horsemeat scandal continues to deepen and widen, it is clear that there are major questions both in terms of EU rules on food safety and quality, transparency and food labelling, and as regards cross-border fraud and crime. These concerns about the regulatory system, product labelling and how this alleged fraud could have been allowed to happen in the EU's internal market, must be addressed without delay."

Green food safety and anti-fraud spokesperson **Bart Staes** (MEP, Belgium) added:

"The mandate of the EU's Food and Veterinary Office is to assure compliance with EU rules on food safety and quality through audits and inspections. The role of the FVO must now clearly be looked at. Applicable EU legislation on food safety and labelling also must be assessed and any deficiencies addressed."

"In particular, there is a need to provide for mandatory country-of-origin labelling for all meat, including meat used as an ingredient in processed food. This should include place of birth, rearing and slaughter. Current EU rules only require country labelling for unprocessed beef. The Greens had called for full origin labelling on meat products in 2010 but this was refused by EU governments, who are now left with egg on their faces. The Commission is currently reviewing the applicable rules on food information and it must propose these changes."

"The allegations of a widespread, cross-border operation linked with this food fraud, clearly raises questions for the EU's agricultural policy and potential fraud with regard to the use of EU funds. To this end, OLAF (the EU's anti-fraud office) must immediately launch an investigation to assess whether there has been any"

misuse of EU funds linked with this scandal."

(1) The Greens/EFA group coordinator on the EP's environment committee **Satu Hassi** has today written to the coordinators from the other political groups to this end.

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Bart Staes

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