AUSTRIAN
OMBUDSMAN BOARD

An die
Europäische Bürgerbeauftragte
Frau Teresa Anjinho
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Contact:	Ref.Nr.:	Date:
Christin Ebeling, BA, LL.M.	2026-0.464.410 (VA/BD-GU/A-1)	01. September 2026

RE: Own Initiative Inquiry OI/1/2026/AML effectiveness of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) in protecting consumers from food-related hazards in the EU

Dear Ombudsperson Anjinho,

Following your letter dated 20 April 2026 concerning the functioning of the EU RASFF, the Austrian Ombudsman Board (AOB) initiated an ex offcio investigation to support your investigation in parallel.

The AOB, therefore, requested a statement from the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES) which is the RASFF network member for Austria. The AOB asked the AGES questions on the efficiency, consistency, and transparency of the reporting system. Please find below a brief summary of the key answers.

Efficiency

It usually takes 1–2 hours for the AGES to notify the RASFF network once all relevant information required for the notification is available. The 48-hour deadline enshrined in Article 17(1) of EU regulation 2019/1715 was never exceeded by the contact points (food and animal feed) in the past two years.

The duration of the sample analysis depends on the type of food and the scope of the analysis. As soon as the analysis yields a result that poses a serious risk, the official experts draw up an expert opinion and forward it to the competent authority and the contact point for further action. If a suspicion already exists, then the analysis can be specifically limited to that suspicion.

Consequently, the assessment and forwarding take place within a few days.

Consistency

Risk assessments are carried out on the basis of toxicological parameters, such as the tolerable daily intake, in combination with the relevant exposure (the amount of the food in question consumed). To ensure a harmonised approach, official experts have access to nationally standardised risk assessment tools. In addition, official experts meet regularly across Austria in relevant working groups to establish uniform criteria and procedures.

Transparency

To ensure that vulnerable groups, i.e. persons with disabilities, older persons, can access product warnings and recalls, the AGES publishes them on its website. In addition, the AGES actively keeps the public informed via its newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky and X, as well as via the AGES Product Alert app. If a product is harmful to health and constitutes a risk to the public, the public must be informed by means of a public notice displayed at the points of sale (‘cash desk notice’), a publication on the trader’s website, and the announcement of a product recall via a suitable medium, e.g. public television channel ORF.

I hope this information will be helpful for your inquiry. Should you need any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out. I wish you all the best with your investigation and hope that our information can support you in your work.

Yours sincerely,

Volksanwalt Mag. Bernhard Achitz e.h.