DONORS’ PERSPECTIVES – EUROPEAN UNION

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Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) is a European Commission training initiative covering food and feed law, animal health and welfare and plant health rules. It trains national authority staff involved in official controls in both European Union (EU) Member States, Countries working towards accession with the EU and Third Countries.

BTSF aims to keep participants up-to-date with all aspects of EU law in the areas specified above and ensure that controls are carried out in a uniform, objective, adequate and efficient manner. Efficient controls are an essential factor in maintaining high levels of consumer protection, animal health and plant health. Harmonisation of controls contributes furthermore to a level playing field for food businesses. Participants from national authorities of Third Countries may under certain conditions attend the Member States’ training. Training is also organised specifically for representatives of Third Countries, particularly developing Countries in their home countries.

The main objectives of the Third Country training are to help Third Countries better understand and more easily meet EU rules and thus reduce the number of consignments rejected at EU borders. This will in turn give EU consumers access to a more diverse range of safe products. A further objective is to enhance SPS regulatory cooperation with and enhance food standards Third Countries to benefit local consumers and ensure fair trade, particularly with developing countries.

Together with this, BTSF has also developed some additional programmes in Third Countries aiming at strengthening their capacity in animal and plant health; supporting food security through technical and policy advice on animal health, food safety and quality; helping Third Countries produce agro-food products compatible with international standards; contributing to reducing food-borne disease; supporting competitiveness of the agro-food sector and contributing to rural development and employment. The year 2009 saw the launch of the BTSF Africa programme, which includes regional workshops, sustained training missions and, based on a service contract with the OIE, the provision of assistance in the organisation of SPS capacity building activities in Africa that covers regular training and information for OIE national focal points for aquatic animals.

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