

## **FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATIONS. ABOUT THE FULL RECOGNITION OF FSSC 22000, OPEN LETTER**

Nowadays, third-party food safety certification schemes play a crucial role in the choice of suppliers from the retail sector. From a food safety assessment perspective these certifications provide indeed sound guarantees over the reliability of processes and products

Amongst all certification schemes, from producers' point of view Food Safety System Certification 22000 (FSSC 22000) appears to be more interesting than others - since it is based on international standards that are recognized all over the world (ISO 22000:2005 and others). FSSC 22000 was also recognized from the Board of Directors of Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), in 2011, as fully compliant with its guidelines, and thus, equivalent to other certification systems, such as BRC and IFS.

Despite that, some large retailers have not recognized yet the value of FSSC 22000. We have indeed noticed that some German retailers – such as Rewe, Aldi, Lidl, Penny Market and Norma - in the framework of their relations with their suppliers as well as in electronic auctions, seem to disregard the equivalence of FSSC 22000 and IFS certifications as granted by GFSI Board. European food business operators are extremely concerned about this situation, since it undermines all the efforts and resources they have put into aligning their production system with GFSI guidelines and, ultimately, it limits their competitiveness and market access, not being given the choice to follow the certification system they want.

This considered, we call for:

- **GFSI and its members** to halt immediately the ongoing discrimination vis-à-vis FSSC 22000-certified businesses, and ensure full recognition of its equivalence with regard to other GFSI-recognized certification schemes;

- the above mentioned **German retailers** to confirm their full acceptance of FSSC 22000 certified suppliers, in both direct B2B relationships and electronic auctions;
- **the European Commission** to monitor market access conditions and take action against unjustified barriers to trade within the Internal market.

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