Greece - OECD Food price formation project

1. **Is there a monitoring entity of food prices, food price transmission and/or of contractual arrangements along the chain in your country? What is its name? When was it established? Does it look specifically at certain products/sectors?**

   The Ministry of Development and Competitiveness has established since 2009 the "Price Observatory" under the General Secretariat for Consumer Affairs. It is a price monitoring entity that records retail consumer prices of about 1.500 products (food and other supermarket products) in about 1.300 outlets.

2. **What is the rationale behind the existence of this monitoring entity? What does it add to what was done in the past in terms of monitoring food prices in your country?**

   The Price Observatory provides information about prices of everyday consumer supplies in supermarkets, organized street markets, municipal markets as well as fish markets. Data collected are uploaded in the official Observatory' site: www.e-prices.gr. Since the establishment of the Price Observatory the information available on retail prices has greatly increased.

3. **Can you identify three key objectives of this institutional initiative? Have they been reached? Did you set up an assessment process? Can you describe experiences that were not as successful?**

   The objective or the Observatory is to provide timely and accurate information to the consumers, the policy makers[i], as well as any other interested party. As of today, no assessment process has been set up.

4. **Who are the "clients" of this monitoring entity: government, specific stakeholders along the chain, consumers? How do they use the tool to your knowledge?**

   Consumers, government, and any other interested party.
   Consumers can search for any product prices in different outlets in their neighborhood using our site: www.e-prices.gr. They can create a basket of goods and make comparisons of total expenditure, thus making efficient choices. Other institutions and private organizations may use all data provided through web services. Site developers use our data to build their own indexes of food prices. The observatory produces internal reports of price changes on a regular basis (usually every 15 days) in order to identify market problems and for policy making.

5. **What is the cost of getting this monitoring entity up and running in terms of:**
   - Involvement of ministries, statistical offices, stakeholders along the chain
   - Financial implications for its regular functioning
   A cost analysis for our operations is not available. The observatory employs 15 people and uses computer server resources, as well as services of information systems personnel for a number of activities involving -in addition to produce supermarket prices- retail and wholesale prices of

fuels, education services tuition and collection of information regarding sales of retail stores (other than food stores). Price collection of food products is made in two ways:

i) Price collectors visit the outlets and collect prices. This is done primarily for non standardized products (fruits and vegetables). This activity is carried out by four employees.

ii) Prices of standardized consumer products (including food supplies) are received by supermarket chains. Any related cost lies within the supermarkets.

6. What are the future plans for this entity?

According to the new Organization of the Ministry of Development & Competitiveness, published on Sept. 3, 2014, effective on November 3, 2014, the Price Observatory will be involved in the collection of prices of primary products at the producer's and wholesale levels. This will validate an already ongoing pilot process.

7. If you do not have such a monitoring entity, are data on food prices at different levels of the chain available publicly? Is food price transmission or transparency an important issue for your government, for consumers and for stakeholders along the chain? Is there a plan to set up a monitoring entity? Did you have one in the past and why did it stop operating?

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8. Does the private sector have a demand for and willingness to provide greater transparency regarding price formation along the food chain according to your experience?

According to our experience there is proved willingness in order to enhance dialogue and exchange views on strengthening transparency on food chain and there is constant collaboration with stakeholders of the agri-food supply chain.

9. Have you identified impediments to price transmission along the food chain? What policies do you think might help mitigate those impediments? Have policy actions been taken? For example, have measures been taken to ensure that food markets are competitive and integrated in your country? What is your assessment of their effectiveness? Are any future policy initiatives affecting relationships along the food chain in the pipelines?

Instability in food prices is a commonplace worldwide, as food prices are affected by many factors, which have impact in Agri-Food chain. This instability has a negative impact, inter alia, in food security. For this reason, at EU and international level, initiatives are taken and policies are made to address this issue in order to improve sustainability and competitiveness of the Agri-Food chain, and at the same time to maintain healthy conditions of competition. The basis of these planned policies is to ensure complementarity, effectiveness and efficiency.

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[i] *The Observatory, additionally to providing data to policy makers, has in many occasions collaborated with the Hellenic Competition Commission and provided requested information.*