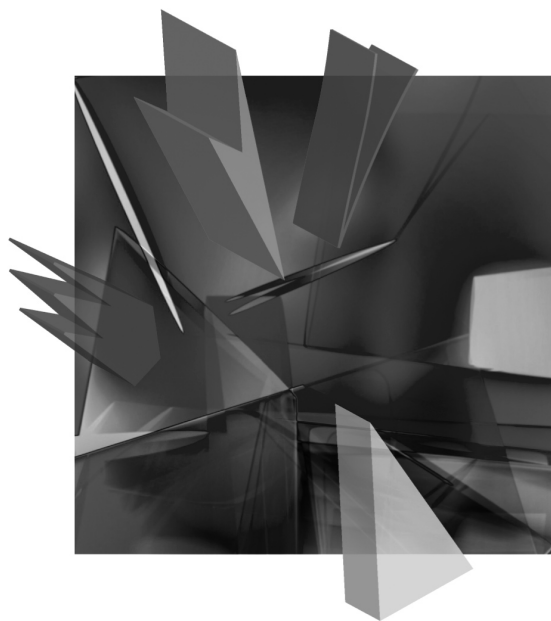


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## **ETHICS AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THE FOOD MARKET\***

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**Summary:** Ethics is an essential and integral part of social responsibility. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be seen as the responsibility of businesses towards society and the environment for the consequences of their decisions and carried out activities. A characteristic feature of the CSR is that companies' behaviour is consistent with ethical behaviour, legislation and international standards of behaviour. Ethical behaviour, which deals with business ethics, is in fact the result of the solution to the conflict between the individual interests of businesses and interests of stakeholders. Consumers are a particular group of stakeholders which are interested in ethical behaviour and social responsibility of companies on the food market. In the interest of every consumer of food products meeting their essential living needs related to the safety and high nutritional value of food product is most important. The aim of this article is to provide essential terms regarding ethics and corporate social responsibility of the companies, the main causes of violation of ethical principles by food manufactures and their unethical actions most negatively affecting their image from the consumers' point of view. Additionally the article contains a brief analysis of five EU countries which sent the largest number of notification to the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) in the years 2009-2013, because of the risk of consuming health and life-threatening food.

**Keywords:** ethics, corporate social responsibility, food, RASFF, consumer.

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### **1. Introduction**

Ethics as a separate philosophical discipline is an integral part of the concept of corporate social responsibility. This relationship is particularly evident in the fact that corporate social responsibility is based on universal ethical principles, which are: namely impartiality, commitment, active cooperation with stakeholders

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\* The paper is an output of the project VEGA number 1/0635/14 – „Status and prospects of development of the organic food market, traditional and regional foods in Slovakia”.

and transparency. The issue of corporate social responsibility is becoming an increasingly important area of concern not only in business, but in all areas of social life. The reason for the introduction of responsible business in organizations is still an emerging requirement for ethical behaviour and enhancing the quality of life throughout society. This requirement appears to be most justified in the context of products safety, especially in the field of food industry. The aim of this article is to provide essential terms regarding ethics and corporate social responsibility of the companies, the main causes of violation of ethical principles by food manufacturers and their unethical actions most negatively affecting their image from the consumers' point of view. Additionally the article presents an analysis of five EU countries which sent the largest number of notification to the RASFF in the years from 2009 to 2013, because of consuming health and life-threatening food.

## 2. Ethics and business ethics

**Ethics** comes from the Greek word "ethos". The original meaning of the word "ethos" means habitual residence, the place where man lives, where man naturalizes. The name of ethics comes from Aristotle (384-322 BC), which named it the doctrine of morality, but at the same time also morality [Agafonová 2006].

Ethics deals with moral philosophy, moral values, and behaviours that make society function. Ethics indicates a condition that expresses act in accordance with reason and mindset. In ordinary life, ethics is understood as a set of principles and rules that can distinguish between what is right or wrong. Therefore the subject of ethics is a conflict that lies in the choice of alternative behaviour.

At present, ethics is a separate scientific discipline of philosophical character that explores morality. The issue of ethics is closely related to what should lead a man to the good, and also to its relationship to the world, society, other people and oneself [Bohatá, Seknička, Šemrák 2001].

**Business ethics** is the study of what is right or wrong in human behaviour in the context of business. It deals with the moral problems that arise in the interaction between businesses, between businesses and customers, or between businesses and society.

The subject of business ethics is the "conflict" between economic and ethical rationality, between interests of individual and community, between the principle of maximizing profits and morality. Business ethics consists of written and unwritten codes of principles and values that govern decisions and actions within a company [Constantin 2010].

According to O.C. Ferrell and J. Fraedrich "Business ethics consists of moral principles and standards that govern behaviour in the business world. Whether certain conduct is good or bad, ethical or unethical, is often determined by the public through the media, interest groups and business organizations, as well as morals and values of individuals. Although these groups are not always right, their views most

significantly affect the acceptance or rejection of individual business operation of the company” [Luknič 1994; Constantin 2010].

Luknič [1994] considered business ethics as “an approach to business that’s primary purpose is the provision of services to the public and no immediate self-enrichment. Enterprise is thus understood as a contributor to society. This also means that the corporation must be managed in this way to serve not only investors, but also employees, customers, the general public, and the entire external environment in which the corporation operates” [Luknič 1994].

Business ethics consists of the following parts [Klopfer 1995]:

1. Utility ethics is related to explore the alternatives of decision from the perspective of the largest groups within the business environment, regardless of the smaller group, which does not benefit from this decision.

2. Requirement ethics follows the general principles of the way of decision-making and examines whether a decision is in accordance with a conscience.

3. Responsibility ethics draws attention to the consequences of making decisions by each participant of business.

4. Virtue ethics is based on the individual characteristics of individual business entities. It refers to the person’s ability to relate to their inner motives, values and interests.

Business ethics, also known as corporate ethics, is considered to be the application of ethical values to business behaviour and is applied to any aspects of business conduct. It is about how a company does its business, how it behaves intrinsically. If we have a look at the sites of different companies, we can easily notice that more and more companies are formulating their own ethical and social responsibility policies. Companies have come to realize that they have to publicize ethical actions and their politics. The general rule is that they work only with partners that follow workplace standards and business practices that are consistent with the company values [Constantin 2010].

### 3. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

In 1953, Howard R. Bowen defined for the first time the term of CSR in his book “*Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*” as the “commitment of organizations to promote strategies, make decisions and to make such activities, which are consistent with the goals and values of society” [Bussard et al. 2005].

The concept of CSR is based on the theory of business ethics, which concerns the examination of the conflict between ethics and economic rationality. The issue of CSR is becoming an increasingly important area of business which can provide success in the long term. Therefore, it is already common “philosophy” in many organizations which take into account not only defining its objectives, but also the development and implementation of various strategies. The CSR includes three types of responsibility: economic, legal and ethical. **Economic responsibility** means that

the company has to do well its activities because of which it has been created as a business entity. **Legal responsibility** means that every activity of the company is performed under current legislation. **Ethical responsibility** says that the company in its economic activities, profit-making, its redistribution, the quality of its products and also by acting on environment, is governed by universal ethical principles, of which the first one is “do not hurt others”. In other words, a business entity in its activities is not governed only by their individual interests but also the interests of the society [Binka, Rolný, Šmajš 2012].

“EU Green Paper”, which was published by the European Commission and which is one of the most famous documents in this field, contains the basic steps of building the CSR strategies, its tools and principles. This paper deemed the social responsibility as a concept which is based on voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns in business activities and the company [Postler 2007].

Other important definition is the one proposed by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, according to which “CSR commits the organization to behave ethically, increase economic growth and contribute to the quality of life for employees of both local communities and society as a whole” [Holme, Watts 2000].

Current definitions of corporate social responsibility are based on universal ethical principles which are impartiality, commitment, active cooperation with stakeholders and transparency. According to the most definitions of corporate social responsibility, the company has to behave socially responsibly towards employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, environment and the like [Holme, Watts 2000].

CSR consists of different moral standards, guidelines or rules of behaviour that are considered to certain principles of conduct. Therefore, an organization should assess each individual principle for each decisive body. Under these principles, there is no complete list, however, there are seven principles of CSR, which are “generally applicable”. These principles according to ISO 26000 are [Košutová, Kristová 2011]: accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, respect for stakeholder interests, respect for the rule of law, respect for international norms of behaviour and respect for human rights.

Increasingly intense need to behave responsibly towards society and the environment has led the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to develop the ISO 26000 standard, which is the guide of basic principles of social responsibility and their implementation into business activities for all enterprises. This standard explains the notion of social responsibility as “responsibility of the organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment on the basis of a transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development, including health and well-being of society, takes into account the expectations of stakeholders, in accordance with legislation and international standards of behaviour and is integrated into the entire organization and applied in its relations” [ISO 26000:2010]. Additionally, ISO 26000:2010 provides guidance to all types of organizations, regardless of their size or location [www.iso.org]:

- concepts, terms and definitions related to social responsibility,
- background, trends and characteristics of social responsibility,
- principles and practices relating to social responsibility,
- core subjects and issues of social responsibility,
- integrating, implementing and promoting socially responsible behaviour throughout the organization and, through its policies and practices, within its sphere of influence,
- identifying and engaging with stakeholders,
- communication commitments, performance and other information related to social responsibility.

ISO 26000:2010 is not a management system standard. It is not intended or appropriate for certification, because it does not contain requirements. Any such certification would not be a demonstration of conformity with ISO 26000:2010 [www.iso.org].

#### **4. Ethics and corporate social responsibility on the food market**

All sectors of the economy are affected by the increasing societal demand with respect to CSR. However, given the characteristics of an industry, the pressure exerted on companies to take up CSR likely differs, for example with the sectors' economic, social and economic impact. While there are such sectors as mining that have a stronger impact on the environment, it is likely there is no other sector that is as highly dependent on natural resources as the food sector while at the same time having considerable and diverse impacts on the environment [Maloni, Brown 2006; Oekom research 2007].

However, the pressure related to implementing CSR does not only differ between industries but also within an industry between companies. Size seems to be a crucial factor in this respect as societies' CSR requirements fall disproportionately on large companies. The EU food sector is characterised by a heterogeneous structure – an atomistic structure at the primary stage, a high level of concentration in retailing and the dominance of micro and small enterprises as regards numbers but not output in food processing. This heterogeneous structure: a) implies that societal pressure regarding CSR likely differs along the food chain, b) influences (partly due to (i)) firms' approach to CSR, c) is linked to differences in bargaining power of firms along the food value chain [CIAA... 2010].

According to CSR the food sector faces specific challenges in particular for three reasons. First, the food sector has a high impact and strongly depends on natural, human and physical resources [Genier, Stamp, Pfitzer 2009; *GfK Panel Services...* 2009]. Second, as food covers basic human needs people have strong views on what they eat. This leads to a complex set of requirements for the food sector regarding the production of raw materials (animal welfare), the environmental (e.g. energy and water use; waste) and social (labour) conditions along the whole value chain as well



as the quality, healthiness and safety of products [Maloni, Brown 2006]. Third, the food chain has a unique and multifaceted structure. Since small and large enterprises differ in their approach to social responsibility, this implies potential conflicts regarding social responsibility involvement in the food supply chain [Hartmann 2011].

One of the key aspirations in all modern concepts of marketing is to build the company's long-term mutually beneficial relationship with the customer, which should lead to the creation of community of partners [McMullan, Gilmore 2008] actively participating in the process of creating a market offer. Unfortunately, in practice, it appears that customers are addressed by the company's unethical marketing activities, which excludes building long-term mutually beneficial relationships. Contrary to the declarations of companies about putting customers and their expectations in the spotlight, in practice very often marketing is used to manipulate their behaviour. Moreover companies use the ignorance of consumers, rather than educate them. This is particularly evident in the food market.

Although the task of each company in the food industry is supplying safe products for the consumer on the market, food scandals have again appeared on the European market in the recent years. An example of unethical behaviour on the food market in **Poland** is a company that sold industrial salt used for salting roads, production of paints and in the tanning industry to food manufacturers. Salt was getting mainly to wholesale buyers, meat companies, fish processing plants, dairies, bakeries, and their products hit the stores across the country.

Another example of unethical behaviour on the food market is a company that was faking dried egg powder mainly used in confectionery, bakery, as well as the production of pasta, ice cream and pates. This company produced dried egg powder with a very high proportion of dried fish, which was stained with yellow turmeric and mechanically enriched with calcium. Fake dried egg powder contained toxic cadmium, lead and E coli bacteria. The production at the plant continued even after the formal closure of the factory and the arrest of its owner. Employees of the company falsified the test results of counterfeit dried egg powder to be able to sell it.

In **England and Ireland** there was found the use of horse meat instead of pork meat in hamburgers sold in Tesco, Lidl and Aldi supermarkets. Products containing horse meat came from two factories in Ireland. In the samples of frozen hamburgers 29% of pork meat content was detected.

In the **Czech Republic**, 25 people died as a result of placing alcohol contaminated with methanol on the market. Fatal poisonings were also found in Poland and in Slovakia. The perpetrators deliberately drew up a poisonous mixture and introduced it on the market through a distributor. Detainee worked in companies using methyl alcohol for the manufacture of windscreen washers. Methanol was legally bought from another company. From methanol they were producing tons of the toxin, which they sold to the distributor of spirits, and the distributor added it to his alcoholic beverages.

In the above examples of business, economic viability was primarily important, not compliance with ethical principles.

Owing to a study conducted by [Baruk 2013] on a group of 500 people in 2010 it was found that from the perspective of the respondents definitely the most important cause of unethical conduct of food manufacturers is striving to achieve in an easy and fast way a deliberate profit, regardless of the possible consequences experienced by consumers (Table 1). The second reason, which was indicated by nearly 50% of the interviewed persons, was strong competition in the food market.

**Table 1.** The main causes of violations of ethical principles by food manufacturers

**Tabela 1.** Główne przyczyny łamania zasad etyki przez producentów żywności

The cause of unethical behaviour	(%)
The strive to achieve deliberate profit in an easy and fast way	81
Strong competition prevailing on the market	48
Improper legislation	28
Too poor publicizing of unfairness of manufacturers proceedings through the media	15
Lack of awareness among customers of their rights	12
Relying on negative patterns	6
Lack of awareness among producers of the impact of public opinion on the results achieved in the long term	6
Social acceptance	4
Lack of positive patterns	4

Source: [Baruk 2013].

Źródło: [Baruk 2013].

In the same studies, the author also asked respondents to identify the unethical actions that most negatively affected their image. More than half of those surveyed (56%) indicated the unethical actions against the final customers (Table 2). The only group of activities which was not indicated by respondents was the unethical behaviour of food manufactures towards their competitors.

**Table 2.** Unethical actions of food producers most negatively affecting their image

**Tabela 2.** Nieetyczne działania producentów żywności najbardziej negatywnie wpływające na ich wizerunek

Type of unethical behaviour	(%)
Unethical actions against final customers	56
Unethical actions towards the environment	19
Unethical actions against employees	25
Unethical actions against competitors	–

Source: [Baruk 2013, pp. 29-37].

Źródło: [Baruk 2013, s. 29-37].

Certainly changes in the proceedings of producers would be much more visible, if customers showed greater determination and firmness to defend their rights [Baruk 2013]. But most consumers do not take such an action. They consider that they will not win with big companies or they have suffered a minimal loss and now they do not want to spend their time to enforce their rights. Other consumers are trying to enforce their rights, alone or with the support of consumer associations. However, this process is long-term and not everyone has enough patience and money to fight and write letters.

In addition to companies that do not respect the rules of ethics in the food industry there are also companies which have developed, implemented and applied ethics and corporate social responsibility in daily business. An example would be the Polish branch of DANONE. For the first time Polish branch DANONE has created a CSR strategy closely integrated with the strategy of business development in 2007 called "Plan for Sustainable Development". This strategy consists of two areas: 1) "Social Engagement"; 2) "Environment". The aim of the strategy is to actively solve social problems related to the malnutrition of children and the implementation of actions should have a positive impact on the environment. The essence of the approach to responsible business is to improve the results in every area of CSR in the company. Therefore, DANONE has developed and implemented a program DANONE Way Fundamentals being a set of 16 standards in the field of sustainable development. These standards cover five areas: 1) human rights, 2) relations with employees, 3) environment, 4) consumer and 5) system management. For each area there are described rules related to the organizational structure, procedures and indicators used to measure ongoing activities in these five areas. In the framework of business ethics, a company requires observance of the Code of Ethics, and by means of appropriate indicators examines whether the principles that this Code introduces are indeed respected in the company [www.danone.pl].

Under the "Social Engagement" company has launched a program "Share your meal" (*Podziel się posiłkiem – PSP*), which aims is to fight with child malnutrition in Poland. The main objective of the program is the number of meals, which children got. The idea is to provide million meals every year. Specific objectives of the program are (www.danone.pl, www.csr.szczecin.pl):

- Contribute to issue a larger number of meals to the most needy children in Poland.
- Enable consumers to get involved in solving the problem of malnutrition of children.
- Raise awareness and mobilize the public, and in particular local communities.

The objectives are realized through the constant elements of the program [www.danone.pl; www.csr.szczecin.pl]:

- Sales of yogurt DANONE branded as "PSP". Part of the profits from the sales of the company passes to the fight against the malnutrition of children.
- The nationwide collection of food "Share your meal" is organized every year in September by a strategic partner – Food Banks. Volunteers from 30 local food

banks in Poland collect food with a long shelf life for two days. The gifts are transferred to organizations which provide food to children in whole Poland.

- The DANONE Grant “Got an idea? Share your meal!” – non-governmental organizations and schools that will present the best ideas on feeding and educational activities for children, receive a grant in the amount of 5 000 PLN for their implementation.
- Since 2006, every edition of the “Share your meal” starts with stars concert organized by the Polsat Foundation and Polsat Television. An admission ticket to the concert is the food collected onsite by the local food bank volunteers.

Another example of company which activities take into account the principles of responsible business is Kompania Piwowarska SA, which was established in 1999 by a merger of the Lech Brewery Wielkopolski SA and the Tyskie Brewery Upper Silesia SA. An international brewing concern – the South African Breweries International (currently SABMiller) was a strategic investor of the company. The group is present in over 60 countries on six continents, and its portfolio includes more than 150 brands, including premium international beers such as Grolsch, Miller Genuine Draft, Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Pilsner Urquell, as well as leading local brands such as Aquila, Castle, Miller Lite, Snow and Tyskie. Kompania Piwowarska SA is the largest brewer company in Poland [www.csr.szczecin.pl].

CSR in Kompania Piwowarska SA is based on the following corporate values of the company [Kuraszko, Augustyniak 2009]:

- Our people are our permanent asset.
- Everyone’s responsibility is clear and personal.
- We work and win in teams.
- We understand and respect our customers and consumers.
- We have only one reputation.

Kompania Piwowarska S.A., together with other breweries owned by SABMiller all over the world, has set 10 sustainable development priorities, which include [Kuraszko, Augustyniak 2009]:

1. Preventing irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
2. Increasing the production of beer using less water.
3. Reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.
4. Recovery and recycling of packaging waste.
5. Responsible waste management, minimization of waste transferred to landfill.
6. Engagement in sustainable development shared with suppliers and customers.
7. Respect for human rights.
8. Activities for local communities (as part of a strategy of social investment company).
9. Reduction of impact of HIV and AIDS in the areas we have influence in.
10. Transparency of information about the progress of sustainable development.

Undertakings in connection with these priorities commitments and targets are monitored by the board. The company assesses the progress that it has made in key

areas of sustainable development in the four-level scale. Thanks to self-assessment it can include matching priorities and changes depending on local requirements.

One of the areas of social activities undertaken by Kompania Piwowarska S.A. is an initiative to reduce the negative effects of social exclusion due to poverty – It's Worth to be for! (*Warto być za!*). It is a nationwide social program, launched in 2006, which is a response to social exclusion due to poverty occurring in Poland. Its aim is to stimulate and support non-governmental organizations in the implementation of projects aimed at the poorest. Under the grant program Kompania Piwowarska S.A. provided 90% funding of projects in the amount of 1.5 million PLN per year. The implementation of the projects was associated with the improvement of quality of life and living conditions of several thousand people from Poland. The program allows to build relationships with local governments and non-governmental organizations through the participation of their representatives in the program board and organized discussions. This initiative received Golden Clip in the category of CSR for the best social campaign in Poland in 2007 [Kuraszko, Augustyniak 2009].

Ethical conduct of the companies on the food market and adherence to the specified product requirements are reflected in the short term, but with regard to sustainability in the long term. This is particularly behaviour which does not deceive and mislead consumers, but on the contrary in accordance with their rights and the obligations of manufacturers, importers, distributors, or retailers, informs about the products, in particular their composition, mode of storage and use. Unfortunately business activities in accordance with ethical behaviour and corporate social responsibility philosophy are not used by all market players.

This is mainly due to imperfect legislation. Laws do not fully regulate all possible behaviours of enterprises. Therefore, some of them compile their own internal codes of conduct, which aim to fill the gaps in legislation. Examples of unethical behaviour of companies in the food market relating to the food can be: a) not writing the truth about the composition of manufactured foods, b) decrease the weight of the product and sell it at original price, c) use of larger packages, with the same amount of product, through which the customer thinks that they buy a larger quantity of the product, d) lowering the quality of the product such as the use of smaller amounts of fruit in fruit yogurt or less meat in meat products. However, the most unethical behaviour of food producers relies on delivering on the market food which may pose a threat to the health and life of consumers.

To prevent hazardous food and feed on the European market Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed has been created. RASFF is a system that allows fast and efficient way to exchange information among entities responsible on the internal market in the field of food and feed that could endanger health or even the lives of consumers.

Created in 1979, RASFF enables information to be shared efficiently among its members (EU-28 national food safety authorities, Commission, EFSA, ESA, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland) and provides a round-the-clock service to ensure that urgent notifications are sent, received and responded to collectively

and efficiently. Thanks to RASFF, many food safety risks had been averted before they could have been harmful to European consumers [<http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff> 2014].

**The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** is the keystone of European Union (EU) risk assessment regarding food and feed safety. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, EFSA provides independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks. EFSA is an independent European agency funded by the EU budget that operates separately from the European Commission, European Parliament and EU Member States. In the European food safety system, risk assessment is done independently from risk management. As the risk assessor, EFSA produces scientific opinions and advice to provide a sound foundation for European policies and legislation and to support the European Commission, European Parliament and EU Member States in taking effective and timely risk management decisions [[www.efsa.europa.eu](http://www.efsa.europa.eu)].





EFSA's remit covers food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant protection and plant health. In carrying out its work, EFSA also considers the possible impact of food chain on the biodiversity of plant and animal habitats. The authority performs environmental risk assessments of genetically modified crops, pesticides, feed additives, and plant pests. In all these fields, EFSA's most critical commitment is to provide objective and independent science-based advice and clear communication grounded in the most up-to-date scientific information and knowledge [[www.efsa.europa.eu](http://www.efsa.europa.eu)].

**The European Free Trade Association Surveillance Authority (ESA)** consists of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and three European Free Trade Association (EFTA) States: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It was established by the EEA Agreement, an international agreement which enables the three EFTA states to participate fully in the European internal (or single) market. The purpose of the EEA Agreement is to guarantee, in all 31 EEA states, **the free movement of goods, people, services and capital** – “**the four freedoms**”. As a result of the agreement, EC law on the four freedom is incorporated into the domestic law of the participating EFTA states. All new relevant EU legislation is also introduced through the EEA agreement so that it applies throughout the EEA, ensuring a uniform application of laws relating to the internal market [[www.eftasurv.int/about-the-authority/the-authority-at-a-glance/](http://www.eftasurv.int/about-the-authority/the-authority-at-a-glance/)].

RASFF notifications usually report on risks identified in food, feed or food contact materials that are placed on the market in the notifying country or detained at an EU point of entry at the border with an EU neighbouring country. The notifying country reports about the risks it has identified, a product and its traceability and the measures it has taken. According to the seriousness of the risks identified and the distribution of the product on the market, the RASFF notification is classified and verified by the Commission contact point as alert, information or border rejection notification (Table 3) [The Rapid Alert System 2012... 2013].



**Table 3.** Types of RASFF notifications**Tabela 3.** Rodzaje powiadomień w ramach systemu RASFF

Sign	Features of notification
	<p>An <b>“alert notification”</b> is sent when a food, feed or food contact material presenting serious risk is on the market and when rapid action is or might be required in another country than the notifying country. Alerts are triggered by the member of the network that detects the problem and has initiated the relevant measures, such as withdrawal or recall. The notification aims at giving all the members of the network information to verify whether the concerned product is on their market, so that they can take necessary measures.</p>
	<p>An <b>“information notification”</b> concerns a food, feed or food contact material for which a risk has been identified that does not require rapid action either, because the risk is not considered serious or the product is not on the market at the time of notification. Commission Regulation (EU) No 16/2011 has added two new sub-types of information notification to the family of notifications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>“information notifications for follow-up”</b> are related to a product that is or may be placed on the market in another member country;</li> <li>2) <b>“information notifications for attention”</b> are related to a product that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is present only in the notifying member country, or</li> <li>b) has not been placed on the market, or</li> <li>c) is no longer on the market.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
	<p>A <b>“border rejection notification”</b> concerns a consignment of food, feed or food contact material that was refused entry into the European Union for reason of a risk to human health and also to animal health or to the environment if it concerns feed.</p>
	<p>A <b>RASFF notification</b> referring to one or more consignments of a food, feed or food contact material that were not previously notified to the RASFF is an “original” notification, classified as alert, information or border rejection notification. Members of the network can transmit <b>“follow-up”</b> notifications which refer to the same consignments and which add information to the original notification such as information on hazards, product traceability or measures taken. A notifying member can identify in its notification other members that should provide follow-up. These members are then flagged for follow-up in the system.</p>

Source: [[http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff/how\\_does\\_rasff\\_work/notifications\\_types/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff/how_does_rasff_work/notifications_types/index_en.htm)].

Źródło: [[http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff/how\\_does\\_rasff\\_work/notifications\\_types/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/rasff/how_does_rasff_work/notifications_types/index_en.htm)].

Based on [The Rapid Alert System... 2014], it can be concluded that in 2013, a total of 3025 notifications were transmitted through the RASFF, of which 596 were

classified as alert, 442 as information for follow-up, 705 as information for attention and 1462 as border rejection notification. After receipt of follow-up information 11 alerts, 38 information (13 information for follow-up, 25 information for attention) and 19 border rejection notifications were withdrawn (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Number of notifications in RASFF system in the period 2009 to 2013

**Table 4.** Liczba zgłoszeń w systemie RASFF w okresie 2009-2013

Year	Alert	Information	Information for attention	Information for follow-up	Border rejection
2009	557	1179	–	–	1441
2010	576	1167	–	–	1544
2011	617	–	718	551	1824
2012	526	–	682	509	1715
2013	585	–	680	429	1443
% in decrees from the 2012 to 2013	+11.2	*	-0,3%	-15.7%	-15.7

\* lack of data.

Source: [The Rapid Alert System 2013... 2014].

Źródło: [The Rapid Alert System 2013... 2014].

In the period from 2009 to 2013 (the number of notifications differed significantly from 2011) when the system received the most announcements and by category of notification: alert notifications (617), border rejection notification (1824), information for attention (718), information for follow-up (551). In the subsequent years (2012-2013) declining numbers of announcements were recorded [The Rapid Alert System... 2014].

Analysing notification in view of a country of notification origin, it can be stated that most notifications were sent to the RASFF EU Member States. Italy was a country that sent the most notifications for the years 2009 to 2013 (Table 5). This country also sent the most notices by the launch of the RASFF (6615). Other countries are Germany, which sent 5657 notifications, United Kingdom (4170), Spain (3254) and the Netherlands (2372) announcements. The only country that still has not sent any notice is Liechtenstein. [<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/portal/>].

Present situation on the European food market from the viewpoint of 10 top notifications by hazard, product category, and country of origin in 2013 is illustrated by Table 6.

Analysing notifications from the product category point of view in 2013 to 2012, there were no significant changes. The most notifications relate to fruit and vegetables that continue to grow (642 notifications). This also applies to other categories of food products: fish (311 notifications), nuts (272 notifications) and meat and meat products (250 notifications). Like in 2012 in 2013 eggs, desserts, oils and fats, al-



**Table 5.** The first 5 countries with the largest number of sent notifications to the RASFF system in the period 2009 to 2013

**Tabela 5.** Pierwszych 5 krajów o największej liczbie powiadomień wysłanych do systemu RASFF w okresie 2009-2013

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Italy (466)	Italy (541)	Italy (544)	Italy (517)	Italy (534)
Germany (412)	Germany (396)	United Kingdom (507)	United Kingdom (517)	Germany (331)
United Kingdom (334)	United Kingdom (319)	Germany (415)	Germany (362)	United Kingdom (327)
Spain (255)	Spain (285)	Spain (297)	France (275)	Netherlands (264)
Netherlands (212)	Netherlands (214)	Poland (223)	Spain (239)	France (249)

Source: based on [RASFF Preliminary Annual Report 2013...].

Źródło: na podstawie [RASFF Preliminary Annual Report 2013...].

**Table 6.** Number of 10 most repeated notifications within the RASFF by type of hazard, product category and country of origin in 2013

**Tabela 6.** Liczba 10 najczęściej powtarzających się zgłoszeń w ramach systemu RASFF w odniesieniu do rodzaju zagrożenia, kategorii produktu i kraju pochodzenia w roku 2013

Hazard	Product category	Origin	Notifications
Aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	Turkey	61
Migration of chromium	food contact materials	China	59
Aflatoxins	nuts, nut products and seeds	China	54
Mercury	fish and fish product	Spain	43
Aflatoxins	fruit and vegetables	Turkey	39
Migration on manganese	food contact materials	China	38
Salmonella spp.	poultry meat and poultry meat products	Brazil	31
Carbon monoxide treatment	fish and fish product	Spain	30
Salmonella heidelberg	poultry meat and poultry meat products	Brazil	29
Salmonella enteritidis	poultry meat and poultry meat products	Poland	28

Source: [The Rapid Alert System... 2014].

Źródło: [The Rapid Alert System... 2014].

coholic beverages and natural mineral water were the least risky [The Rapid Alert System... 2013].

Nuts and nut products imported mainly from Turkey and China contained aflatoxin. A large number of poultry and poultry products coming from Brazil and Poland contained *Salmonella* spp. In 43 cases, fish and fish products imported from Spain contained traces of mercury. The most dangerous substances were detected in the products occurring in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. It was chrome, aflatoxins, mercury, nickel, salmonella and others. These dangerous substances were detected mainly in nuts, fish, meat, fruit and vegetables [The Rapid Alert System... 2013].

## 5. Conclusions

No individual is above the law and provides a rule of law which is superior to law. Assuming that all existing rules (government regulations) have been established in good faith mainly in order to make all activities of a company and market products protect consumers' health, safety and the environment, it is sufficient in terms of corporate social responsibility to respect the rule of law, i.e. the rule of legality. In case when such rules are not respected, when the penalty (if at all) for a violation is not punishment, or even the rules are tailored for certain interest groups, ethics with social responsibility are missing. They are becoming more and more important and are responding not only to published food scandals, caused by intentional infringement rules on the market. The requirement of corporate socially responsible behaviour is often the leading aim of business activities. In this situation the question arises whether it is really about finding rules, which would be accepted by all stakeholders in the global market products or ethics and social responsibility are misused for the purpose of perceiving certain companies on the market in a positive light.

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## ETYKA I SPOŁECZNA ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚĆ PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW NA RYNKU ŻYWNOŚCI

**Streszczenie:** Etyka jest zasadniczą i integralną częścią społecznej odpowiedzialności. Społeczna odpowiedzialność biznesu (*Corporate Social Responsibility* – CSR) może być postrzegana jako odpowiedzialność przedsiębiorstw wobec społeczeństwa i środowiska na-

turalnego za konsekwencje podejmowanych decyzji i działań. Cechą charakterystyczną CSR jest to, że zachowania przedsiębiorstw są etyczne, zgodne z prawem i międzynarodowymi normami postępowania. Etyczne zachowanie w biznesie jest w rzeczywistości rezultatem rozwiązania konfliktu między interesami przedsiębiorstw a interesami innych uczestników rynku. Konsumenci są szczególną grupą, która jest zainteresowana etycznym zachowaniem przedsiębiorstw na rynku żywnościowym i realizacją przez nich biznesu społecznie odpowiedzialnego. Dążeniem każdego konsumenta jest przede wszystkim zaspokojenie jego podstawowych potrzeb życiowych związanych m.in. z konsumpcją żywności bezpiecznej, ale także o wysokiej wartości odżywczej. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie podstawowych pojęć dotyczących etyki i społecznej odpowiedzialności przedsiębiorstw, głównych przyczyn naruszenia zasad etycznych przez producentów żywności i ich nieetycznych działań, najbardziej negatywnie wpływających na ich wizerunek z punktu widzenia konsumenta. Ponadto artykuł zawiera krótką analizę pięciu krajów Unii Europejskiej, które wysłały największą liczbę powiadomień do systemu wczesnego ostrzegania o niebezpiecznej żywności i paszach (RASFF) w latach 2009-2013 ze względu na ryzyko spożycia przez konsumentów żywności zagrażającej ich zdrowiu i życiu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** etyka, CSR, żywność, RASFF, konsument.