

Food Security in Germany: Inclusion of the Private Sector through Law Reform Faces Challenges

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Abstract : If critical infrastructures fail, even for a short period of time, it can have significant negative consequences for the affected population. This is especially true for the food sector that is strongly interlinked with other sectors like the power supply. A blackout could lead to several cities being without food supply for numerous days, simply because cash register systems do no longer work properly. Following the public opinion, securing the food supply in emergencies is considered a task of the state, however, in the German context, the key players are private enterprises and private households. Both are not aware of their responsibility and both cannot be forced to take any preventive measures prior to an emergency. This problem became evident to officials and politicians so that the law covering food security was revised in order to include private stakeholders into mitigation processes. The paper will present a scientific review of governmental and regulatory literature. The focus is the inclusion of the food industry through a law reform and the challenges that still exist. Together with legal experts, an analysis of regulations will be presented that explains the development of the law reform concerning food security and emergency storage in Germany. The main findings are that the existing public food emergency storage is out-dated, insufficient and too expensive. The state is required to protect food as a critical infrastructure but does not have the capacities to live up to this role. Through a law reform in 2017, new structures should be established. The innovation was to include the private sector into the civil defense concept since it has the required knowledge and experience. But the food industry is still reluctant. Preventive measures do not serve economic purposes – on the contrary, they cost money. The paper will discuss respective examples like equipping supermarkets with emergency power supply or self-sufficient cash register systems and why the state is not willing to cover the costs of these measures, but neither is the economy. The biggest problem with the new law is that private enterprises can only be forced to support food security if the state of emergency has occurred already and not one minute earlier. The paper will cover two main results: the literature review and an expert workshop that will be conducted in summer 2018 with stakeholders from different parts of the food supply chain as well as officials of the public food emergency concept. The results from this participative process will be presented and recommendations will be offered that show how the private economy could be better included into a modern food emergency concept (e. g. tax reductions for stockpiling).

Keywords : critical infrastructure, disaster control, emergency food storage, food security, private economy, resilience

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