

# GHI MATTERS

Vol. 05 - May 2026

## Welcome to our new GHI newsletter

May brings a new wave of activity across the Global Harmonization Initiative, and we are pleased to share the latest developments shaping our work around the world. With our network expanding beyond 2,000 members, GHI is entering a period of renewed momentum, strengthened by the expertise, commitment, and collaboration of professionals across regions and disciplines.

This month, we highlight how our community continues to drive progress in science-based food safety and global regulatory cooperation. From ambassador outreach and international partnerships to early preparations for the upcoming GHI World Congress, our collective efforts are helping to build stronger connections and support practical solutions for safer, more resilient food systems.

You will also find updates on ongoing initiatives, new opportunities for engagement, and organisational priorities that will guide our work in the months ahead. As our network grows, so does our ability to bring people together, exchange knowledge, and foster collaboration that leads to real-world impact.

At the heart of GHI's mission is a simple principle: progress happens when people connect. We invite our members, partners, and all those who share our vision to stay engaged, explore new avenues for cooperation, and continue shaping a global community committed to advancing food safety through science.

## GHI President's message

Dear Members of the Global Harmonization Initiative,

May has been a month of growth, connection, and renewed momentum across the GHI community. I am delighted to share that GHI has now officially surpassed 2,000 members, a milestone that reflects the strength of our global network and our shared commitment to advancing science-based food safety. This achievement belongs to the collective dedication of academics, researchers, professionals, regulators, and students who believe in the power of collaboration to build safer, fairer, and more resilient food systems.

Throughout the month, our ambassadors and working groups members have been active across regions, taking part in workshops, university events, and professional forums that amplify GHI's voice and strengthen our presence in key food safety discussions. These engagements highlight the importance of connecting science, policy, and practice, especially as global food systems face increasing pressures from climate change, conflict, and economic uncertainty.

A particular highlight has been the growing excitement around the 2027 GHI World Congress. The Local Organising Committee at Selçuk University has offered our community an early glimpse of the venue in Konya, showcasing the warm hospitality and dynamic setting that await us. Their dedication and enthusiasm are already helping to shape what promises to be an inspiring and truly global gathering. The congress details are also now publicly visible, with the event scheduled for 5-9 July 2027 at Selçuk University in Konya, Türkiye.

May also brought cultural and religious celebrations across our membership. Many colleagues observed Eid al-Fitr, while others took part in Ascension Day and Pentecost gatherings. These moments remind us that food is not only a matter of safety and regulation, but also a source of identity, belonging, and cultural connection.

Looking ahead, preparations for World Food Safety Day 2026 are well underway. This year's theme, "From burden to solutions – safe food everywhere," highlights how data and science can guide effective action to reduce foodborne illness and protect public health. We are also pleased to announce that GHI is now accepting grant applications from researchers and organisations in Africa and the Caribbean, with a focus on projects related to the right to food and the right to health.

Finally, we are eagerly anticipating the official launch of the new GHI website, which will offer improved functionality, clearer navigation, and a more engaging platform for our worldwide community.

As always, the strength of GHI lies in its people. Your engagement, expertise, and dedication continue to drive progress across borders. Thank you for being part of this journey – together, we are building a stronger, more connected global community, ready to meet the challenges ahead with science, collaboration, and purpose.

With appreciation,

Dr. Diana Bogueva

President, Global Harmonization Initiative



For more information:

Website: <https://www.globalharmonization.net>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/global-harmonization-initiative/posts/?feedView=all>

# A New Digital Chapter for GHI

The Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) is proud to announce the launch of its newly enhanced website: [www.globalharmonization.net](http://www.globalharmonization.net) - a timely debut on 1 June, International Children's Day. In the spirit of this celebration, we welcome this platform as GHI's "new child": a fresh, dynamic creation that we will continue to nurture, strengthen, and grow into a powerful and influential tool for the global food safety community.

For more than two decades, GHI has built a strong legacy of scientific integrity, consensus-building, and regulatory alignment while working to eliminate unnecessary barriers to global food trade. As our international network of scientists, regulators, and industry experts continues to expand, the organization's digital platform has evolved to better support collaboration, knowledge sharing, and accessibility across borders.

The redesigned website is more than a visual upgrade - it is a modern, scalable platform created to strengthen global cooperation, streamline access to science-based resources, and support more effective communication among stakeholders in the food safety and regulatory community.

"This enhanced website reflects our ongoing commitment to leveraging technology to better support food scientists, regulators, and stakeholders worldwide," said Dr. Diana Bogueva, the GHI president. "By investing in improved digital capabilities, we are making it easier to access scientific consensus, connect with our specialized working groups, and engage with practical resources that support the harmonization of food safety laws globally."

The launch of the new platform also marks an important moment of recognition for the people who made this transition possible. Their contributions reflect the collaborative spirit that has always driven GHI's work and its global community.

As we celebrate this important milestone for GHI, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the two people who made this transition possible. My heartfelt thanks go to Mark Sandow, GHI Board Member and GHI NextGen leader, whose exceptional work, creativity, and dedication brought our new website to life. Mark has stepped confidently into the role long held by Gunter Grail, and he has done so far with remarkable professionalism and vision. I am equally grateful to Gunter, whose unwavering commitment over the past 20 years has

been nothing short of extraordinary. As our webmaster, he cared for every update, every technical challenge, every cyberattack, and every detail that kept GHI visible, secure, and connected. He also played a key role in initiating the transition to this new platform, offering guidance, support, and meticulous attention throughout the process. Their dedication to GHI is deeply appreciated, and I am profoundly thankful for their contributions to this new digital chapter", said Dr. Diana Bogueva, the GHI president.

## Key features of the new website include:

- **Streamlined Navigation** — A clean, intuitive interface that simplifies access to scientific publications, harmonization projects, regulatory frameworks, and educational resources.
- **Interactive Collaborative Tools** — Enhanced digital portals that enable GHI Working Groups to communicate efficiently, share data, and collaborate seamlessly across time zones.
- **Expanded Knowledge Repository** — A centralized collection of authoritative white papers, articles, scientific briefs, and guides focused on food safety legislation, risk assessment, and global food security.
- **Enhanced Resource Access** — Specialized tools and materials designed to support researchers, policymakers, regulators, and industry professionals in advancing international regulatory discussions and strategic planning.

As the GHI website transitions to its new platform, we would also like to remind all members and followers that the Global Harmonization Initiative **Whistleblowing Platform** remains fully active and available. This secure and completely confidential channel enables individuals to report food safety concerns, regulatory inconsistencies, or emerging risks. It continues to play an essential role in supporting GHI's commitment to transparency, scientific integrity, and global consumer protection.

The launch of the new GHI website marks an important milestone in GHI's digital evolution and reflects the organization's ongoing commitment to transparency, accessibility, scientific excellence, and innovation. Like any new child, this platform will continue to grow - becoming stronger, more capable, and increasingly influential as we expand its features and deepen its impact.

GHI invites all members, partners, and colleagues to explore the new website, discover updated resources, and engage with its expanded capabilities at [www.globalharmonization.net](http://www.globalharmonization.net).



GLOBAL HARMONIZATION INITIATIVE

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## GHI Congress 2027 Preparations Begin: A First Look at Konya's World-Class Venue and Warm Turkish Hospitality

Excitement is rising across the GHI community as preparations for the 2027 GHI World Congress move into full swing. This week, the Local Organising Committee at Selçuk University offered an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the stunning venue in Konya, giving the global community a first taste of what awaits them at next year's landmark gathering.

During a special preview visit, the committee including Prof. Dr. Ramazan Çöl, Prof. Dr. İskender Yıldırım, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Birsen Bulut-Solak (GHI's Türkiye ambassador) showcased the impressive main hall – a modern, spacious venue designed to welcome scientists, students, policymakers, and industry leaders from around the world. With its advanced technical setup, comfortable seating, and elegant architectural design, the hall reflects Konya's growing reputation as a hub for international academic gatherings.

But the venue is only part of the story. The heart of the preparations lies in the dedicated team at Selçuk University, whose enthusiasm and professionalism are already shaping the spirit of the Congress.



*Second hall for parallel sessions*

The Organising Committee, working closely with GHI leadership, is committed to creating an unforgettable experience for all attendees – one that blends scientific excellence with the warmth and generosity of Turkish hospitality.

Their efforts go far beyond logistics: the team is focused on shaping a welcoming environment where every participant feels valued, supported, and inspired from the moment they arrive. From ensuring smooth on-site coordination to preparing cultural touches that reflect the spirit of Konya, the committee is dedicated to building a congress atmosphere that encourages meaningful conversations, new partnerships, and a sense of belonging within the global GHI community.

GHI is proud to partner with Selçuk University, a collaboration that is already bringing fresh energy and momentum to the preparations. The university's drive, openness, and strong international outlook make it an ideal partner for hosting a congress of this scale.

With both teams working side by side, the partnership is quickly transforming ideas into action and setting the stage for a congress that will be vibrant, welcoming, and globally impactful. The enthusiasm from Selçuk University has injected real dynamism into the early planning phase, and GHI is excited to build this event together with such a committed and forward-looking institution.



*From left to right:  
Prof. Dr. İskender  
Yıldırım, Prof. Dr.  
Ramazan Çöl, and  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Birsen  
Bulut-Solak*

A highlight of the preview was a behind-the-scenes look at the restaurant facilities, where Ramazan, a key member of the local team, personally inspected the preparations to ensure everything meets the highest standards. From menu planning to service flow, every detail is being refined to offer guests a memorable culinary experience that reflects the richness of Turkish culture.



Prof. Dr. Ramazan Çöl showing the congress restaurant

The message from both GHI and Selçuk University is clear:

**We are ready – and we warmly welcome the world to join us in Konya as we prepare to host an inspiring and truly global GHI Congress.**

Together, we look forward to creating an unforgettable experience that celebrates science, collaboration, and the spirit of international community.

With state-of-the-art facilities, a passionate organising team, and the unique charm of Turkish hospitality, the 2027 GHI World Congress promises to be an inspiring, vibrant, and truly global gathering. Stay tuned. Registration details and program updates will be shared soon. For now, mark your calendars and get ready to be part of an event that brings together science, culture, and community in one extraordinary setting.

### Don't miss out:

Start planning to join us at the GHI Congress for 5 days of science and fun (5-9 July), come with us to see beautiful Konya and

Cappadocia **Submit an Abstract:**

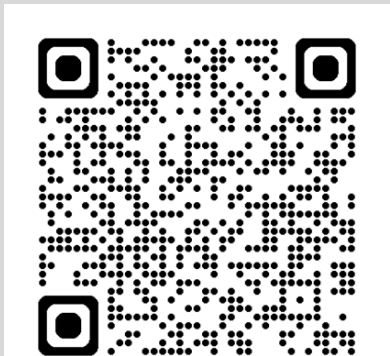
<https://www.ghiworldcongress.org/abstract-submission/>

**Explore sponsorship options:**

<https://www.ghiworldcongress.org/sponsorship/>

**More information:**

Please contact us at [2027@ghiworldcongress.org](mailto:2027@ghiworldcongress.org)



# GRANT



# ANNOUNCEMENT



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## Right to Food and Right to Health Small Grants Program

The Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) and the Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean (HeDPAC) are thrilled to announce that submissions are now officially open for the **Right to Food and Right to Health Small Grants Program**, launched in the lead-up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> GHI World Congress, taking place 5–9 July 2027 in Konya, Türkiye.

This ambitious program marks a major step toward advancing equitable, rights-based, and science-informed research across Africa and the Caribbean. It supports innovative social science projects that illuminate how food systems, nutrition, and health outcomes intersect within the internationally recognised Rights to Food and Health. As the program states, it reflects a shared commitment to *“fostering inclusive, rights-based, and science-informed dialogue that bridges research, policy, and practice to advance global health equity.”*

### A Major Funding Opportunity

Three competitive grants of up to USD 10,000 each are now open for application:

- Up to USD 8,000 for research project costs
- Up to USD 2,000 to support travel and participation at the GHI World Congress in Konya Türkiye (5–9 July 2027)

Projects must be fully completed within 12 months, covering research design, data collection, analysis, reporting and publication. Grantees will present their findings during the Congress special session **“The Right to Food and the Right to Health.”**

### What This Program Is All About

The HeDPAC–GHI Small Grants Program is designed to:

- Generate new social science research that strengthens understanding of how food, nutrition, health, and wellbeing are interconnected within rights-based frameworks.
- Produce robust, actionable evidence capable of informing policy, advancing advocacy, and supporting more equitable and sustainable food and health systems.
- Advance health equity, with a focus on vulnerable and marginalised populations disproportionately affected by food insecurity and unsafe food environments.

These aims directly reflect the program’s core purpose to “produce robust evidence and generate actionable data capable of informing policy... and supporting more equitable and sustainable food and health systems.”

## Why This Matters

Food and nutrition are fundamental determinants of health – and the Rights to Food and Health are inseparable. They are mutually reinforcing, and their fulfilment is essential to achieving both gender equity and health equity. Yet, as identified through a survey of GHI Congress participants, there remains a significant research gap: a lack of policy-relevant studies examining these rights together. This program directly responds to that gap, inviting researchers to shape the next generation of evidence and action.

## Eligibility

Applications are open to:

- Doctoral (Ph.D.) candidates
- Postdoctoral researchers, associates, or fellows
- Professional researchers affiliated with accredited universities or research institutes

Researchers must be based in **Africa or the Caribbean**. Early-career researchers and applicants from underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply.

## Application Package

Applicants must submit a single PDF including:

- Research proposal (max 1500 words)
- Budget & justification (up to USD 10,000) 12-month timeline
- CVs (max 3 pages each) and two recommendation letters
- Optional references

All submissions must be sent to: [2027@ghiworldcongress.org](mailto:2027@ghiworldcongress.org) by 15 July 2027.

## Monitoring, Check-ins & Key Dates

To ensure strong progress and early support, selected grantees will participate in structured check-ins with the program team:

- Inception Meeting: September 2026
- Quarterly Progress Meeting: December 2026
- Midpoint Review (with written update): February 2027
- Quarterly Progress Meeting: April 2027
- Final Progress Meeting: August 2027
- GHI Congress Presentation: 5–9 July 2027
- Project End Date: August 2027

These touchpoints are designed to “*foster dialogue, provide technical support, identify challenges and mitigate risks early in the research process.*”

## Deliverables

Grantees will produce:

- A working paper or draft article suitable for peer-review
- Participation in a HeDPAC/GHI knowledge-sharing event (GHI Congress and others)
- A final report (max 10 pages)
- Engagement in mentorship and networking opportunities

## A Call to Action

This is a rare opportunity to contribute to meaningful, rights-based transformations in food and health systems – and to do so on a global stage.

Researchers, institutions, and cross-sector collaborators across Africa and the Caribbean are warmly invited to apply and help shape a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Submit your proposal to [2027@ghiworldcongress.org](mailto:2027@ghiworldcongress.org). Submissions are now open.

As we open this call for proposals, we invite researchers across Africa and the Caribbean to bring forward bold ideas, rigorous inquiry, and community-rooted perspectives that can reshape how the world understands the links between food, nutrition, and health. This program is more than a funding opportunity – it is a platform to elevate new voices, generate transformative evidence, and contribute to a global movement advancing the Rights to Food and Health. We look forward to receiving proposals that push boundaries, challenge assumptions, and help build a more just, resilient, and sustainable future for all.

## South Africa Releases Draft Standard on Food Donation and Redistribution

A noteworthy development is emerging from South Africa that speaks directly to the global shift toward safer, more sustainable surplus-food management. The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has released the draft national standard SANS 2088: Food Donation and Redistribution Best Practice, now open for public comment until 16 June 2026. The draft sets out clear guidance for ensuring that donated and recovered food is handled safely, responsibly, and in alignment with national food safety requirements.

The proposed standard is significant because it:

- Aligns with existing food safety legislation to ensure consistency across the system
- Emphasises traceability, labelling, and handling to protect recipients and maintain accountability
- Connects food safety, food security, and sustainability in a single, coherent framework

This development was shared with us by Associate Prof. Belinda Meiring, one of the GHI’s Ambassadors for South Africa. While she was not involved in drafting the standard, she recognised its relevance to GHI’s work on science-based harmonisation and its potential to inform global discussions on safe surplus-food redistribution. She noted that initiatives like this help illustrate how national regulatory progress can support broader international alignment, especially in areas where practical guidance is still evolving.



Associate Prof. Meiring has also reached out to FoodForward South Africa, one of the key organisations behind this initiative, to explore future collaboration opportunities that could connect national efforts with GHI’s broader international work. She noted that aligning such national initiatives with international expertise could help accelerate the development of practical, harmonised guidance for safe food donation worldwide.

This draft standard offers a timely example of how countries are formalising safe, responsible food donation practices - an area where harmonised, evidence-based guidance is increasingly needed worldwide. It also highlights how national initiatives can contribute valuable practical insights to the broader global effort to strengthen safe and sustainable food redistribution systems.

This kind of structured approach also helps build a clearer foundation for future alignment between national standards and international best practices, supporting more consistent implementation across borders.

# Building New Bridges

## GHI President Explores Strategic Partnerships at Wroclaw University of Economics and Business



The vibrant academic atmosphere at the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business (UEW), Poland set the stage for a dynamic exchange of ideas as students, researchers, and university leaders welcomed a special guest – Dr. Diana Bogueva, hosted by GHI Ambassador UEW Prof. Agnieszka Orkusz. What began as a warm academic reception quickly transformed into a dynamic exploration of ideas spanning global food safety, emerging research trends, and the evolving role of young scientists in shaping the future of the field. The atmosphere was energised by the shared recognition that today's global food-system challenges demand collective action, interdisciplinary thinking, and partnerships that cross borders. With the support of Prof. Agnieszka Orkusz, GHI Ambassador, Dr. Bogueva helped spark this spirit of collaboration, setting the tone for a visit filled with engagement, inspiration, and new opportunities for working together.

A highlight of the visit was the vibrant Scientific Seminar Session hosted by the Biotechnology and Food Analysis Department, where students showcased their research projects and innovative product prototypes to an enthusiastic audience. Their creativity, scientific curiosity, and confidence set an inspiring tone for the day. During the session, Dr. Bogueva contributed with a talk on Gen Z, climate-change anxiety, and its influence on food choices, while also introducing GHI and the upcoming Konya Congress. Her presentation sparked thoughtful discussion and strong



engagement from the students, who were eager to understand how global harmonisation efforts intersect with the challenges and expectations of their generation. The exchange of ideas created a dynamic atmosphere that highlighted both the talent within the department and the relevance of GHI's work to emerging food science professionals.

A key moment of the visit was a meeting with Prof. Bogusława Drelich-Skulska, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation. What began as a brief introduction quickly developed into a thoughtful and forward-looking discussion about the 2027 GHI World Congress, opportunities for the UEW to strengthen its engagement with GHI's international network. The conversation highlighted the university's strong foundations in food science, economics, and international cooperation, revealing clear synergies with GHI's mission. Prof. Drelich-Skulska expressed interest in exploring potential collaboration opportunities, recognising the potential for UEW to contribute to, and benefit from GHI's global scientific community.



From right to left: Prof. Bogusława Drelich-Skulska, Dr. Diana Bogueva, and Associate Prof. Agnieszka Orkusz

The visit also included productive meetings with Prof. Joanna Harasym, Head of the Department of Biotechnology and Food Analysis, joined by UEW Prof. Orkus, GHI Ambassador and a key academic within the department. Their discussion quickly moved into concrete opportunities for collaboration across several GHI Working Groups – including consumer perception, chemical food safety, nutrition, and food safety training.

Both sides identified strong potential for joint research initiatives, deeper student engagement, and meaningful contributions to the scientific program of the 2027 GHI Congress. The conversation also opened the door to applying for a collaborative project between GHI and the UEW, aiming to connect UEW's scientific strengths with GHI's global network and create long-term, high-impact cooperation.

A particularly enriching part of the visit took place at the BioOrganic Chemistry Department, where Prof. Lucyna Dymińska and her team – Dr. Inż. Edyta Kucharska, Dr. Wojciech Szaśiadek, and Dr. Jacek Michalski – welcomed Dr. Bogueva into their laboratories and research spaces. The department is deeply engaged in some of the most current challenges in food technology, including the processing of plant raw materials and the assessment of food quality and functionality.

Their innovative work on milk thistle seed sprouts, together with a wide portfolio of advanced analytical

studies, resonates with some of the GHI working groups' scientific priorities.

Prof. Lucyna Dymińska team's exploration of current challenges in food technology, plant raw material processing, and the quality and functionality of food products opened a natural space for discussing how their findings could contribute to global harmonisation efforts – from improving analytical comparability across countries to supporting evidence-based regulatory decisions.

The exchange of ideas revealed clear scientific synergies and highlighted how Wrocław University of Economic and Business research strengths could enrich GHI's global agenda. It also opened promising avenues for collaboration, including joint studies, contributions to working group outputs, and potential involvement in the scientific program of the 2027 GHI Congress.



*Dr. Diana Bogueva and Prof. Joanna Harasym*



*Prof. Lucyna Dymińska's team with their milk thistle seed sprouts*



*Prof. Lucyna Dymińska and Dr. Diana Bogueva*

*Dr. Inż. Edyta Kucharska, Dr. Wojciech Szaśiadek, Dr. Diana Bogueva, Dr. Jacek Michalski, Prof. Agnieszka Orkus and Prof. Lucyna Dymińska*



# GHI WORKING GROUP NEWS

To support effective Congress planning, working groups were encouraged to schedule their internal congress meetings and submit their proposed sessions before the end of April 2027 to the Congress organisers at [2027@ghiworldcongress.org](mailto:2027@ghiworldcongress.org). Securing these arrangements early will guarantee each group a dedicated place in the official program, allowing participants to identify and engage with the Working Groups most relevant to their interests. This approach also helps ensure that attendees can fully experience the rich scientific program being developed for the Congress, without scheduling conflicts or missed opportunities.

These meetings reaffirmed that GHI's Working Groups are the scientific backbone of the organisation. Their leadership, visibility, and active participation will be essential in making the 2027 Congress a landmark event that advances global harmonisation and strengthens the impact of science-based food safety worldwide.

## Shaping GHI's Scientific Future: Working Group Leaders Align Ahead of the 2027 Congress

GHI recently convened a series of virtual meetings with Working Group Chairs and Vice Chairs to strengthen scientific leadership, deepen engagement, and align priorities ahead of the 2027 Global Harmonization Initiative Congress in Konya, Türkiye. To ensure global participation across time zones, four meeting options were offered – enabling every Working Group leader to join the discussion at a time that suited them..

These sessions, led by Dr Diana Bogueva, GHI President and Chair of the Consumer Perception Working Group, together with Prof. Joe Regenstein, GHI Vice President and Co-Chair of the Food Safety in Relation to Religious Dietary Laws Working Group, brought together an exceptional group of scientific experts from across the GHI network. We were pleased to welcome:

- Dr. Firouz Daroudi – Chair, Genetic Toxicology & Genomics WG
- Prof. Michael Murkovic and Prof. Dr Franco Pedreschi – Co-Chairs, Chemical Food Safety WG
- Dr. An-I Yeh – Co-Chair, Nanotechnology & Foods WG
- Prof. Dr. Bojan Šarkanj – Vice-Chair, Mycotoxins WG
- Associate Prof. Barbara Borusiak, Prof. Mojca Jevšnik, Dr Mihaela Geicu-Cristea, Assist. Prof. Katerina Swiander, Prof. Diana Banati, Assoc. Prof. Agnieszka Orkusz, Dr. Paula Hage Boutros, Prof. Alexandrina Sirbu – Consumer Perception WG
- Prof. Stanley Brul – Chair, Food Microbiology WG
- Prof. Iuliana Vintilă and Dr. Viduranga Waisundara – Chair and Vice-Chair, Nutrition WG
- Ajetunmobi Ioyinbolaji and Fiston Alex Twagirimana – Vice-Chairs, Food Law & Regulations WG
- Dr. Omidiran Adebukola – Vice-Chair, Food Packaging Materials WG
- Prof. Dr Adewale Olusegun Obadina – Chair, Food Safety Training & Education WG

Across all sessions, the discussions centred on how working groups can strengthen their scientific presence, increase participation, and contribute more visibly to GHI's global mission. Key themes included:

- Deepening engagement of working group members in ongoing and upcoming GHI initiatives
- Identifying scientific priorities and emerging issues within each domain
- Preparing topics for the GHI Webinar Series to showcase expertise and reach wider audiences
- Enhancing collaboration across working groups to address cross-cutting global challenges
- Improving communication channels between Working Groups and the GHI Board
- Expanding outreach and visibility in national, regional, and international networks

A major focus of the meetings was the strategic role of working groups in shaping the scientific program of the 2027 GHI Congress. Leaders explored how each group could contribute meaningfully to the event through special sessions, symposia, panel discussions, case studies, and cross-regional collaborations, ensuring that the Congress reflects the full diversity, expertise, and scientific depth of the GHI community. Many working groups have already proposed strong ideas for potential special sessions, demonstrating both enthusiasm and scientific leadership across the network.

## Championing African Food Futures: Charles Aworth Takes the Stage at Circularity Africa 2026

A distinguished voice in African food systems and Emeritus Prof. at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, as well as a long-standing and respected member of GHI, delivered a standout keynote at the 7th Circularity Africa Conference 2026.



The event, organised by the Africa Circular Economy Research and Policy Network (ACERPIN), was held from 12–15 May 2026 at the Global Affairs and Sustainable Development Institute (GASDI), Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria.

At the Opening Ceremony on 13 May, Prof. Aworth presented his invited keynote, "African Traditional Foods and Food Security Challenges: Building Sustainability and Resilience through a Circular Economy." Charles's keynote offered a compelling exploration of how Africa's diverse food traditions can anchor a more resilient and circular food future. Drawing on his long academic career, he highlighted how indigenous knowledge systems, fermentation practices, biodiversity stewardship, and community-based food cultures provide practical pathways for reducing waste, strengthening nutrition, and building climate-resilient food systems.



Charles's contribution at Circularity Africa 2026 highlights how scientific expertise, cultural knowledge, and circular-economy thinking are converging across the continent. His keynote brought forward perspectives deeply rooted in African food traditions while aligning with global efforts to build more resilient, low-waste, and sustainable food systems.

For GHI's global community, his presence at this high-level forum reflects the strength of long-standing collaborations, the value of culturally grounded approaches to food safety, and the growing opportunities for shared learning and engagement across regions shaping the future of food.

Together, these contributions help ensure that African perspectives, traditions, and scientific leadership are fully represented in the global dialogue on sustainable and resilient food systems.

He emphasised that many traditional African foods already embody circular principles – from whole-crop utilisation to low-energy processing – and argued that recognising and scaling these practices could transform both local livelihoods and regional food security. His talk also addressed the structural challenges facing African food systems, including post-harvest losses, fragmented value chains, and the erosion of traditional food knowledge, calling for stronger integration of science, policy, and cultural heritage.

By bringing these perspectives to an international audience, Charles helped position African food culture not as a nostalgic reference point, but as a strategic asset for shaping sustainable, future-ready food systems. His contribution added depth, credibility, and cultural insight to the broader conversation on circularity and resilience taking place across the continent.



May is one of those months that seems to come alive through food. Across cultures and continents, it brings a colourful mix of flavours, traditions, and seasonal celebrations that remind us how deeply food is woven into our identities and communities. It is a month where kitchens, markets, and outdoor spaces all play their part in marking the arrival of warmer days and the joy of sharing meals together.

Throughout May, entire themes unfold. Barbecue season begins in many parts of the world, filling neighbourhoods with the familiar scent of grilling as families gather outdoors. Hamburgers take their turn in the spotlight as one of the most recognisable global comfort foods, while strawberries — bright, sweet, and unmistakably tied to spring — appear in markets and on tables in countless forms, from simple bowls of fresh fruit to elaborate desserts.

Alongside these month-long traditions, May is dotted with food days that celebrate both cultural heritage and everyday favourites. Cinco de Mayo brings vibrant Mexican dishes and flavours to the forefront, reminding us of the power of food to carry history and identity. Shrimp lovers enjoy their moment mid-month, while hummus — a humble yet iconic staple of Middle Eastern cuisine — is honoured for its simplicity and global appeal. Even the chocolate chip earns its own celebration, a small but beloved ingredient that has shaped countless childhood memories. And as the month draws to a close, wine enthusiasts raise a glass to the agricultural and cultural heritage behind one of humanity's oldest traditions.

Taken together, these celebrations show that food is far more than nourishment. It is a bridge between cultures, a keeper of traditions, and a source of joy and connection. May's rich tapestry of food observances invites us to pause, appreciate the diversity of global culinary heritage, and celebrate the ways in which food continues to bring people together, despite of their diet and traditions.

### New Benefits for GHI Members Through the GHI-EHEDG Collaboration

As we mentioned in our April newsletter, the collaboration between GHI and EHEDG continues to create meaningful advantages for our members. One key opportunity this year is the EHEDG World Congress in Vienna, taking place 7-8 October 2026, where GHI members can register at the EHEDG member rate, including the reduced student rate. To recap the main benefits now available:

- Member-rate access for both organisations' conferences
- Complimentary Hygienic Design training offered by EHEDG at the GHI World Congress in Konya (5-7 July 2027)
- Visibility at both events through booths and shared information spaces
- 100-euro rebate to GHI for each GHI member (not already an EHEDG member) attending the EHEDG Congress at the full member rate.
- Promotion of the new EHEDG University membership fee of 100 euros

These arrangements we hope will make it possible for GHI members to participate, learn, and benefit from both communities' expertise.

### Advancing One Health Dialogue

The Wroclaw Annual International Conference on Health and Lifestyle (WAICHL-2026) in Poland provided an excellent platform for strengthening collaboration between GHI and Polish academic partners.

Associate Prof. Barbara Borusiak, an active member of the GHI Consumer Perception Working Group, presented her study "Testing the One Health Paradigm: Relationships Between Environmental Concern, Health Consciousness, and Animal Welfare Attitudes." Her work offered clear evidence of how public values shape engagement with the One Health concept and highlighted the importance of understanding consumer perspectives.

In a separate presentation, Dr. Diana Bogueva, the GHI President examined socio-cultural barriers to One Health adoption in rural and urban environments. She discussed how cultural norms, trust, and communication practices influence the uptake of One Health initiatives and stressed the need for approaches that reflect local realities.

Dr. Bogueva also briefly introduced the mission of the Global Harmonization Initiative and invited participants to join the upcoming GHI World Congress to continue building connections and sharing expertise.



Dr. Wioletta Nowak (conference organizer), Dr. Diana Bogueva, and Associate Prof. Dr. Barbara Borusiak

# Strengthening Food Safety and Community Resilience in Lebanon: A University-Municipality Collaboration

Food safety is a cornerstone of public health, consumer trust, and economic stability - especially in countries navigating economic and institutional pressures. In Lebanon, GHI members continue to demonstrate leadership through education, research, and community-driven action. One standout example is the recent Food Safety Initiative led by Dr. Christelle Bou-Mitri, Associate Prof. of Food Science at Notre Dame University-Louaize and active GHI Consumer Perception working group member. In partnership with the Municipality of Jounieh and the university's Office of Student Affairs, the initiative shows how universities can strengthen municipal capacity while supporting safer, more resilient food systems.

Beyond inspections, the initiative supported food security, tourism recovery, and community resilience by helping restore consumer confidence and improving safety standards in local food environments. It also expanded municipal inspection capacity through academic expertise and student engagement.

This collaboration highlights the important role universities and GHI members play in advancing evidence-based food safety governance and community wellbeing. Under Dr. Bou-Mitri's leadership, the initiative offers a promising model for future university-municipality partnerships in Lebanon and the wider region.

## Key Outcomes

- 59 students received hands-on professional training in food safety inspection;
- 130 food establishments were inspected within approximately 50 days;



The project began with the first Food Safety Inspector Training on 8 November 2025, delivered by Senior Food Safety Expert and GHI Food Safety Ethics working group member Zeina Nakat. Fifty-nine students from multiple health, nutrition, and hospitality programs received hands-on training using the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health inspection checklist.

Over the following 50 days, student inspection teams assessed 130 food establishments across Jounieh - including restaurants, bakeries, supermarkets, and food service operations. Businesses received tailored feedback and practical recommendations to improve hygiene, reduce risks, and strengthen compliance.

- Food businesses received individualized recommendations for improvement;
  - The initiative strengthened food safety awareness and compliance practices;
  - Students gained practical field experience and professional competencies;
  - The project supported municipalities by expanding inspection and outreach capacity;
  - The model demonstrates how GHI members in Lebanon actively contribute to food safety and food security through education, research, and community engagement.
- This initiative shows how local action can drive meaningful, lasting impact.



# World Food Safety Day 2026

## From Burden to Solutions: Safe Food Everywhere

We are pleased to invite you to a special webinar celebrating World Food Safety Day 2026, organized by the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Lebanese Association for Food Science and Technology (LAFST), the Lebanese American University (LAU), the Modern University for Business and Science (MUBS), and the International Society of Public Health (ISPH).

Safe food is not only a public health priority — it is a cornerstone of sustainable development, supporting healthier populations, resilient food systems, responsible production, and global partnerships for a safer future.

**Monday, June 8, 2026**  
**11:00 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Beirut Time (10:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. CET)**



**Program:**

11:00 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.	Introduction to FNHS and NDU <b>Dr. Jessy El Hayek, Dean of the FNHS</b>
11:10 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Introduction to the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) <b>Dr. Diana Bogueva, President of GHI</b>
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	World Food Safety Issues: Lessons from Accumulated Cases and Experiences <b>Prof. Chin-Kun Wang, ISPH &amp; GHI, UN Goodwill Ambassador</b>
11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Overview of the 2026 Cereulide in Infant Formula <b>Rob Kooijmans, M.Sc, GHI</b>
11:50 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.	Food Safety and Resilient Agrifood Systems: Emerging Priorities and Solutions for Lebanon and the NENA Region <b>Dr. Moustapha Mohamed, FAO NENA</b>
12:05 p.m. - 12:25 p.m.	The Chronic Pollution of the Litani River: Emerging Microbiological Threats to Food Safety and Public Health in Lebanon <b>Prof. Mahmoud Halablal, LAFST</b>
12:25 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Unmasking Hidden Gluten: Evaluating the Compliance of Gluten-Free Products in Lebanon and the UAE <b>Prof. Hussein Hassan, LAU</b>
12:45 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.	Ultra-Processed Food Consumption in Lebanon: A Growing Food Safety and Public Health Concern <b>Dr. Paula Hage Boutros, MUBS</b>
1:05 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.	Real Food Safety - Know, Understand, Execute: Insights from an Old Professor and a New Graduate <b>Prof. Randall K. Phebus, Ph.D</b> Kansas State University

# World Food Safety Day 2026: Global Experts Unite for a High-Impact Webinar

To mark World Food Safety Day 2026, the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), in collaboration with the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) and leading national and international partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), hosted a dynamic webinar under the theme "From Burden to Solutions: Safe Food Everywhere."

The event will gather an impressive lineup of global experts, researchers, and practitioners from FAO, GHI, ISPH, LAU, MUBS, and Kansas State University, reflecting the truly international nature of today's food safety challenges — and the collective effort required to address them.

GHI President Dr. Diana Bogueva will open the scientific program with an introduction to GHI's mission and global work, setting the stage for a series of thought-provoking presentations covering some of the most pressing food safety issues of our time.

Highlights from the Program include:

- Prof. Chin-Kun Wang who will share lessons from global food safety incidents and the importance of learning from accumulated cases.
- Rob Kooijmans who will present insights on the 2026 cereal included in infant formula, a topic of high relevance for regulators and industry.
- Dr. Moustapha Mohamed (FAO NENA) who will be discussing emerging priorities for resilient agrifood systems in Lebanon and the region.
- Prof. Mahmoud Halablal who will be addressing microbiological threats linked to the chronic pollution of the Litani River.
- Prof. Hussein Hassan who will examine compliance issues in gluten-free products across Lebanon and the UAE.
- Dr. Paula Hage Boutros who will highlight the growing public health concerns associated with ultra-processed food consumption.
- Prof. Randall K. Phebus will be closing the event with a practical and inspiring session on real-world food safety skills.

With more than two hours of rich scientific exchange, the webinar underscored a powerful message: safe food is essential for public health, sustainable development, and resilient societies.

This World Food Safety Day event will demonstrate the strength of collaboration between academia, international organizations, and GHI members and reaffirmed the shared commitment to advancing food safety knowledge and solutions worldwide.



Click [here](#) to register and join

# World Food Safety Day Spotlight: GHI Romania Drives National Dialogue

To mark World Food Safety Day, GHI members and ambassadors in Romania will host a national workshop titled “Food Safety, Security and Inclusion in Romania” on 5 June 2026 at the Faculty of Biotechnologies, Aula Magna “Prof. Dr. Gheorghe Câmpeanu”, Bucharest. Organised under the leadership of Assistant Prof. Dr. Mihaela Geicu-Cristea, and Prof. Dr. Liviu Gaceu, both GHI Ambassadors and Prof. Mona Elena Popa, active member of the Consumer Perception working group, the event will bring together experts from biotechnology, food science, engineering, and public health to strengthen Romania’s food safety culture and promote science-based solutions.

- The workshop features a rich program of presentations, including:
- advancing food safety and inclusion from a global GHI perspective,
  - STEAM-based education for food safety awareness,
  - integrated urban food policies and sustainability co-benefits,
  - mold remediation strategies in food processing plants,
  - modern consumer perceptions of food risks,
  - hygienic engineering in contemporary food production.

The event highlights the strong engagement of GHI Romania in promoting safer, more resilient, and more inclusive food systems. It also reinforces the core message of World Food Safety Day: ensuring safe food is a shared responsibility across science, policy, and society. This workshop demonstrates the leadership of GHI ambassadors and members in Romania and their commitment to advancing food safety at national and international levels.



## SECTION 6 – BIOTECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP



# Food Safety, Security and Inclusion in Romania

## 05.06.2026

Faculty of Biotechnologies, Aula Magna “Prof. dr. Gheorghe Câmpeanu” - First Floor  
Chairperson: Prof. PhD. Mona Elena POPA

TIME	AUTHORS	PRESENTATIONS
14.00 – 14.20	Diana Bogueva <sup>1</sup>	Advancing Science-Based Food Safety and Inclusion: A Perspective from the Global Harmonization Initiative
14.20 – 14.40	Mihaela Geicu-Cristea <sup>1, 2, 6</sup>	STEAM Activities in Schools: Promoting Food Safety, Security and Inclusion
14.40 – 15.00	Liviu Gaceu <sup>6, 7, 8</sup> , Ioana Sonia Comănescu <sup>8</sup> , Mona Elena Popa <sup>1, 2, 5, 6, 7</sup> , Oana Bianca Oprea <sup>6, 8</sup> , Romulus Gruia <sup>8</sup> , Mihaela Badea <sup>8</sup> , Cristina Ștefania Galbau <sup>8</sup> , Ligia Chelmea <sup>8</sup>	Integrated Urban Food Policies and Sustainability Co-Benefits: Insights from the FoodCLIC Living Lab Braşov
15.00 – 15.20	Corina NEAGU <sup>3, 4</sup>	Tackling Mold Remediation in Food Processing plants
15.20 - 15.40	Nicole Livia Petculescu <sup>5</sup>	The modern consumer and food risks
15.40 - 16.00	Mona Elena Popa <sup>1, 2, 5, 6, 7</sup> Liviu Gaceu <sup>6, 7, 8</sup>	Hygienic Engineering in Modern Food Processing

<sup>1</sup>GHI – Global Harmonisation Initiative; <sup>2</sup>UASVM of Bucharest; <sup>3</sup>Dunărea de Jos University of Galați; <sup>4</sup>AGIR – The General Association of Engineers of Romania; <sup>5</sup>ASAS – Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Food Industry Section; <sup>6</sup>ASLAR – The Romanian Association of Food Professionals; <sup>7</sup>EHEDG – European Hygienic Engineering & Design Group; <sup>8</sup>Transilvania University of Braşov.

# GHI Enhances Its Role in European Emerging Risk Assessment

The Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Asli Solmaz-Kaiser as its new representative to the EFSA Emerging Risks Discussion Group (StaDG-ER). This strategic nomination strengthens GHI's contribution to Europe's early-warning and foresight activities in food safety, particularly in the field of emerging chemical risks, where rapid scientific interpretation and global awareness are essential.

GHI's participation in StaDG-ER is supported by the expertise of its Chemical Food Safety working group, chaired by Prof. Dr. Franco Pedreschi and Prof. Michael Murkovic. Under their leadership, the group has established a strong scientific basis for identifying and contextualising chemical hazards across the global food chain. Their combined strengths in toxicology, global contamination monitoring, and regulatory analysis enable GHI to contribute a comprehensive and internationally informed perspective to EFSA's emerging risk ecosystem.

## GHI's Added Value to EFSA's Emerging Risks Work Comprehensive Chemical Hazard Expertise

GHI's Chemical Food Safety working group provides expertise across the full spectrum of chemical hazards relevant to emerging risk detection, including:

- process contaminants (acrylamide, furan, ethyl carbamate, 3-MCPD)
- naturally occurring toxins (mycotoxins, marine biotoxins, plant toxins)
- pesticide and veterinary drug residues
- industrial chemicals and food-contact contaminants (bisphenols, PFAS, primary aromatic amines)

This broad scientific coverage enables GHI to identify cross-category patterns, interactions, and early warning signals that may not be visible within narrower hazard domains.

## Science-Driven Consensus Methodology

The Working Group brings together experts from academia, government, and industry who collect and evaluate global data, develop white papers and scientific opinions, and reassess the evidence behind existing chemical regulations. This consensus-driven process ensures that emerging risks are assessed using clear, science-based criteria, allowing genuine risks to be distinguished from early or uncertain signals.

## Global Contamination Monitoring

With members in over 80 countries, GHI has early visibility into contamination trends emerging beyond Europe's regulatory reach. This global perspective is vital, as many chemical risks first arise in regions with differing regulatory systems or limited detection capacity. These insights help EFSA anticipate potential threats before they enter European supply chains.

## Cross-Jurisdictional Regulatory Insight

GHI's mission to harmonise food safety regulations provides deep insight into regulatory inconsistencies, gaps where risks can develop unnoticed, and areas where emerging hazards may exploit differences between jurisdictions. This perspective strengthens EFSA's ability to anticipate risks before they escalate.

## Effective Communication to Decision Makers

GHI plays an active role in communicating food safety science to policymakers, regulators, and industry leaders. This ensures that StaDG-ER's insights reach the stakeholders responsible for implementing chemical safety controls.

## Coordinated Expert Participation

GHI supports its representatives through internal alignment with its working groups, ensuring consistent, informed, and coordinated engagement with EFSA.

## About Asli Solmaz-Kaiser

Asli Solmaz-Kaiser is the CEO of iComplai, an early-warning system that helps the food industry anticipate and prevent risks across

global supply chains. With more than 20 years of experience in product safety and regulatory innovation, she has served on the German National Product Safety Committee and led global product development at a major testing and certification organisation. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Mannheim and is an active member of GHI's Chemical Food Safety Working Group.



## Next Steps: Alignment on Food Fraud Expertise

Asli will deliver two presentations at the upcoming EFSA Emerging Risks meeting: one on emerging risks and one on food fraud. Both presentations will be developed in close consultation with GHI's Food Safety working group and the Food Safety Ethics working group. These groups provide the scientific, regulatory, and ethical expertise needed to ensure that the content reflects GHI's evidence-based approach to risk assessment, integrity in food systems, and responsible decision-making.

## Share Your News With Us

Our global strength comes from our members' work. Have updates on projects, events, publications, regional activities, or food safety and harmonization news?

Send them to us – your contributions keep the GHI community informed, connected, and inspired.

**NEW!**

The official GHI journal:  
Quality Assurance and Safety of Crops & Foods (QASCF)

published by:



Discounts and Waivers - 25% APC discount to GHI members. Additional waivers or discounts for authors from low-income countries or for special GHI-led initiatives.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Prof. Joe Regenstein for editing and content review, and Mark Sandow for the newsletter design and for the distribution of the newsletter.

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