

Traditional Herbal Medicines Directive 2004/24/EC

This Directive specifies a list of registered substances, including their numerous preparations, combinations and their potency. Whilst the European Union aims to incorporate as many traditionally used medicines as possible into the list, the Directive sets out **specific criteria in order to guarantee a high level of health protection for European citizens.**

Although some small and medium sized business owners may feel that this Directive could put their trade at a disadvantage, it should be recognised that harmonising Member States' legislation across Europe can allow for better trading links and easier procedures for **ensuring a single market for traditional herbal medicines.**

Furthermore, by encompassing traditional herbal remedies under one legislation makes it **easier to support and fund scientific research** and innovation in the field of medicines and pharmaceuticals.

Due to growing concerns regarding the banning of certain products, the Directive aims to simplify the registration system for traditional herbal products, particularly those which have a long tradition of safe use, by avoiding unnecessary testing and trials where sufficient knowledge already exists about a particular product. Furthermore, the European Commission extended this approach to even more traditional medical practises, allowing products from anthroposophic, Ayurvedic, Chinese, Kampo Korean, Mongolian, Thai, Tibetan, Unani and Vietnamese systems.

The transition phase for this legislation is now almost complete and ready to be fully imposed across the European Union. The European Parliament, from its part, will continue to ensure the legislation has no detrimental effect on small and medium sized business who trade in traditional herbal medicines, all whilst ensuring the upmost quality of health protection for European citizens.