

## FOOD SUPPLEMENTS DIRECTIVE

Thank you for your recent email regarding The Food Supplements Directive (2002/46/EC) and for raising your concerns with the issues that surround its approaching enforcement. This legislation aims to harmonise and co-ordinate existing national rules among the European Union Member States with regard to the use of vitamins and minerals in food supplements. It applies only to food supplements which are classified as "food" under European Legislation meaning any substance or product intended or expected to be ingested by humans.

Please find a link to the original text for your information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:183:0051:0057:EN:PDF>

I have received many letters from South West SMEs and constituents, and there is a general concern that the European Commission is going to adopt very restrictive regulations on levels of potency, to the point where there could prove little or no effect at all. While we can all appreciate that this is aimed at keeping the public's health protected, I think that there should be reasonable levels set to allow for supplements to work effectively and for people to still get the benefits of their chosen product.

With this in mind, I have written to Commissioner John Dalli (Health and Consumer Policy) several times to find out exactly how the Commission intends to ensure that consumers still have access to their chosen products whilst protecting their health. I also felt it necessary that he take note of European consumers' comments before the proposals for maximum and minimum levels are published.

In his reply, Commissioner Dalli reassures that the various working groups are conducting extensive analysis before setting maximum and minimum levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements. He makes clear that the results from studies launched by the European Food Standards Agency (EFSA), the Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food (ANS), as well as manufacturers are all being taken into account.

In addition, not only are health and safety issues being addressed, but the Commission is also evaluating potential effects on economic operators within this industry. He writes that the regulation will not result in a decrease in choice or quality of products, but will encourage the free sale of safe, assured vitamins and minerals.

My office is following the progress of this Directive very closely, having already attended several briefing sessions by natural health organisations including the Alliance of Natural Health. I have also recently signed an open letter to the Commission on behalf of Consumers for Health Choice. My fellow MEPs and I will continue to make sure that your concerns are brought to the Commission's attention during this process.

I hope this goes some way to explaining the current situation with regard to food supplements and eases some of your concerns.

Giles Chichester MEP