



Health & Consumer Voice

September 2009

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A smoke free Europe by 2012

Following extensive consultation, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Council Recommendation on 30 June calling on Member States to bring in laws by 2012 to protect their citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke. Tobacco remains the largest single cause of premature death and disease in the European Union. According to conservative estimates, 79 000 adults, including 19 000 non-smokers, died in the EU-25 in 2002 due to exposure to tobacco smoke at home (72 000) and in their workplace (7 300).



mounting for smoke-free policies, with 84% of Europeans supporting smoke-free offices and other indoor workplaces; 77% in favour of smoke-free restaurants, and 61% supporting smoke-free bars and pubs.

The Recommendation calls on Member States to act on three main fronts:

- Adopt and implement laws within three years of the adoption of the Recommendation to fully protect their citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke in enclosed public places, workplaces and public transport (as stated in Article 8 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control);
- Enhance smoke-free laws with supporting measures such as protecting children, encouraging efforts to give up tobacco use and pictorial warnings on tobacco packages;
- Strengthen cooperation at EU level by setting up a network of national focal points for tobacco control.

All Member States have some form of regulation in place to limit exposure to second-hand smoke and its harmful effects on health. The scope and character of these regulations vary.

So far, ten EU Member States provide comprehensive protection from exposure to tobacco smoke. Total bans on smoking in all enclosed public places and workplaces, including bars and restaurants, are in place in Ireland and the UK. A similar ban is due to come into force in Bulgaria in June 2010. Italy, Malta, Sweden, Latvia, Finland, Slovenia, France and The Netherlands have introduced smoke-free legislation allowing for special enclosed smoking rooms.

However, in the remaining Member States, people are still not fully protected from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces and public places. A recent Eurobarometer poll suggests that popularity is

For further information, please see:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1060&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>



In brief



European policy makers focus on tuberculosis

The European Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation's Regional Office for Europe (WHO EURO) met in Luxembourg on 30 June and 1 July with more than 90 representatives from the European Ministries of Health, donors, partners and stakeholder to discuss how to prevent and control tuberculosis.

In 2007, 50 000 cases of tuberculosis were reported in the 53 WHO EURO countries, including 85 000 in the 27 EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries. As such, the European countries are short of reaching their common objectives of controlling and stopping TB.

To tackle this challenge, the participants agreed on a series of actions and principles to halt the spread of TB in Europe: strengthen the involvement of the civil society and NGOs, promote health systems strengthening, ensure the follow-up on the 2007 Berlin Declaration (that resets health agendas across the WHO European Region), ensure that the European countries have access to the existing funding mechanisms and ensure that research is maintained as a priority.

European award on NGO combat against tuberculosis

In order to highlight the work carried out and the achievements made by non-governmental organisations to combat against tuberculosis, a European award on NGO combat against TB was assigned to three NGOs during a two-day meeting on Tuberculosis organised on 30 June and 1 July in Luxembourg.

The aim of the award is to provide recognition to European NGOs for their achievements and sustainable and outstanding work against tuberculosis in the WHO European Region.

The three non-governmental organisations rewarded for their important contributions were as follows:

- 1st Prize - CARLUX, from Moldova;
- 2nd Prize - KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation, from The Netherlands;
- 3rd Prize - Health of Romany People Foundation, from Bulgaria.

Consumer rights: Enforcement Package adopted

“Enforcement” is the act of making sure that consumer rules are respected. This encompasses a wide spectrum of activities, by a variety of actors, using different instruments. The adoption of the Enforcement Package on 2 July marks a milestone in the enforcement of consumer rights, since the initiatives seek to secure the highest possible level of consumer protection which will, in turn, give consumers confidence to exploit the full potential of the Single Market.

The EU has developed a set of consumer rules, aiming for a strong, healthy and competitive Single Market, in which consumers can confidently buy goods and services within the EU, but rules on their own are not enough – they must be applied properly in practice if we want them to deliver tangible results for citizens, and that is why enforcement matters.

This Enforcement Package consists of a Communication and a Report on the first two years of application of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation 1, which established an EU wide network of public authorities enforcing consumer rules in the Member States (CPC Network).

Based on an analysis of the state of play and of what has been achieved so far, the Communication takes stock of consumer enforcement action and aims to identify the main challenges that need to be overcome to ensure more effective enforcement of EU consumer law. The Communication also identifies five priority areas with accompanying actions to improve enforcement, thereby delivering to EU consumers the highest possible level of consumer protection with-



out increasing the administrative burden on companies.

The Commission's Biennial Report is based on national reports from Member States, statistical data extracted from the IT-tool used by the CPC Network and the practical experience gained through the coordination of the Network's first joint enforcement actions, the EU-sweeps. It is the first such report adopted by the Commission and covers the years 2007 and 2008. It shows that the new CPC instrument is fulfilling its purpose, but it also indicates that more work is still needed to increase the Network's efficiency.

The European Commission does not have direct enforcement powers vis-à-vis traders in enforcing consumer laws. This is the prerogative of Member States. However, given the emergence of new factors such as e-commerce, enlargement of the Single Market and the increased globalisation of trade in goods and services, enforcement can no longer be seen as confined to national boundaries.

In this context, the Commission has a unique pan-European vantage point which can bring added value to an effective, coherent and optimal enforcement policy in the EU.

For further information, please see:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/312&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

New feed regulation in the EU

Farmers and pet owners will soon get better information on the feed they buy - a step that will further strengthen food safety in the EU. On 22 June, the Council of Agriculture Ministers adopted a regulation which replaces the current legislation on marketing and the use of feed.



“bio-proteins” is abolished. Now “bio-proteins” have to comply with the general provisions for feed materials;

- Mandatory labelling for feed materials and mixed feed. In particular, the regulation provides for specific mandatory labelling requirements for feed materials, compound feed (including pet food) and “dietetic” feed;

- Solution to the controversial issue of the declaration of feed materials in compound feed (so-called “open declaration”) in a balanced way to allow innovation and, at the same time, appropriate information for customers;

- Creation of a guide to good labelling for farm animal feed and one for pet food on the initiative of stakeholders (feed manufacturers and users) and approved by the Commission (Co-regulation);

- Establishment of a Community Catalogue of feed materials in co-regulation. The regulation transfers the initiative for updating the EU’s list of feed materials, specifying the most relevant compounds used in feed, from the legislator to feed operators.

The legislation will now be signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament and the Council and will then enter into force later this year.

For further information, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/animalnutrition/labelling/index_en.htm

The new legislation, based on a Commission proposal of 2008, considerably simplifies the existing procedures and helps to promote innovation and competitiveness in the European feed sector. It is also expected to contribute to a more integrated single market for feed by reducing the administrative burden for feed operators. The regulation was endorsed by the European Parliament on 5 February and is expected to enter into force later this year.

The regulation caters for modern marketing conditions and addresses the different information needs of the specific types of feed purchasers, such as qualified farmers or ordinary pet owners. It also provides for the modern tools of commerce, such as the internet. Furthermore, it establishes a new co-regulation approach which delegates competences in non-safety relevant areas to feed operators, subject to approval by the Commission. By considerably simplifying existing legislation, it reduces the administrative burden for all stakeholders.

The text contains modern, simplified rules on the:

- Responsibility of feed business operators expanded to include those dealing with pet food;
- List of prohibited substances for feed use;
- Obligation to undergo a pre-market authorisation procedure for

In brief



On-line debate on EU health and consumer policy

Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) turns 10 years old this autumn. To celebrate this occasion, on September 14, DG SANCO will launch an on-line discussion on health and consumer policy on Debate Europe.

EU health and consumer policy touches many aspects of the daily life of Europeans, from the safety of the food they eat or the products they use, to the protection they enjoy when making purchases - be they abroad or online, to the promotion of healthy living and medical services across our borders.

But does the general public consider that EU health and consumer policy has had an impact on their lives? If so, was it helpful or did they have negative experiences? And are there still issues where the EU should intervene – or do better?

An on-line debate will provide Europeans with a good opportunity to make their voices heard on health and consumer policy and to get involved with a discussion with others. While visiting a special sub-site they will also be able to vote in an on-line opinion poll and learn more about EU initiatives by watching video-clips or following links provided.

The specific channel on Debate Europe is open from September 14 - 9 October 2009. The conclusions of the on-line discussion will be presented during an anniversary seminar on 23 October 2009 which will be attended by current and former Commissioners, stakeholders and the media. It will also be made available on the DG SANCO website.

Those wishing to participate should follow this link: http://europa.eu/debateeu-urope/index_en.htm.



A new Business Application to notify dangerous products

In an address of 3 July to the European Business Leaders Convention in Helsinki, Meglena Kuneva, European Commissioner for Consumers, presented to business leaders the new "GPSD Business Application", an on-line system for producers and distributors to notify authorities in Member States about dangerous consumer products on the EU market.

Producers and distributors have an obligation to alert all Member States where dangerous goods were found on the market under the General Product Safety Directive (GPSD, 2001/95/EC). Up to now, such notifications had to be sent to each Member State separately. The new online system will make it possible for businesses to alert all Member States concerned, at the same time, in one

step, thereby simplifying and speeding up the process. This is of prime importance to any consumer who may be at risk from such products.

The "GPSD Business Application" is a secure internet system, which has been operational since May 2009. It can be accessed by companies via the Commission's website (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/gpsd-ba/>) where companies can download the notification form. Once completed, a notification is submitted to the database of the application, where it will become available to authorities of Member States. Access to the database is restricted to Member State authorities.

For further information, please see:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/315&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

Animal treatment in slaughterhouses

Conditions for animals at the time of killing will improve considerably from 1 January 2013, when a regulation providing for a series of practical measures to ensure animals are humanely treated, will enter into force. To simplify existing legislation and bring it into line with food hygiene regulations, the proposal integrates welfare considerations into the design of slaughterhouses and requires the regular monitoring of the efficiency of stunning techniques.

Every year, nearly 360 million pigs, sheep, goats and cattle as well as several billion poultry are killed in EU slaughterhouses for their meat. In addition, about 25 million animals are killed for their fur. The control of contagious diseases may also require the culling of thousands to millions of other animals.

The new regulation provides that slaughterhouses will have to ap-



point a specific person responsible for animal welfare and ensure that their staff is properly trained and certified. Each operator will have to develop and implement standard operating procedures for ensuring proper welfare standards in a reliable way. Requiring standardized procedures for animal welfare is an innovation of this regulation, which will require operators to evaluate the efficiency of their stunning methods through animal based indicators. After stunning, animals will have to be regularly monitored to ensure they do not regain consciousness before slaughter.

For further information, please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/slaughter/index_en.htm

In brief



30 Years of RASFF – keeping an eye on your food

In the context of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers organised a high-level conference on 16 July to give operators, consumers and authorities the opportunity to interact and reinforce the network of interested parties worldwide. Through an active exchange of knowledge and views between the various stakeholders, the conference explored the current role of the RASFF in food safety and how the system can be further improved and enhanced in order to achieve the highest possible level of food safety.

Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou opened the conference and offered a glimpse of what RASFF is all about. Work done and work in progress were explained both by the European Commission, which is managing the system, and by a Member State actively participating in it. Other views of the system were presented through keynote speeches by the ASEAN secretariat, BEUC and WHO.

A brand new RASFF public portal and a new IT application replacing the current RASFF public weekly were also launched. Furthermore, the 2008 Annual Report was presented on this occasion, together with a special booklet on the 30 years of the system, an explanatory RASFF leaflet and a video. All this material is now available online.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.30yearsrasff.eu/>



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Layout: Rosita Scanferla.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm
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