

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

Michel Coomans, the new Head of Unit in charge of the food and drink industry within DG Enterprise addressed the Trade and Competitiveness Committee last week. He presented a review of issues that he considered will require cooperation with CIAA over the next months. The WTO negotiation process, bilateral issues, but also competitiveness feature high on his agenda. He outlined the work that is currently being undertaken until the autumn by a consultant with a view to assess the food industry's competitive position through a modelling procedure. The work that CIAA has undertaken in this field will provide essential expertise and basic reference. His objective is to come up with specific policy recommendations by 2007

Food Chain and Animal Health

EC Advisory Group on Food Chain and Animal Health Addresses EFSA Fees, Rapid Alert System on Food and Feed and Labelling Issues

On 19/05, CIAA attended a meeting of the European Commission's Advisory Group on the Food Chain and Animal Health, at which a number of issues were discussed, including the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), a variety of labelling issues, and whether EFSA should be in a position to charge fees for the processing of authorisation files.

The Commission informed the Group that it intends to draft Implementing Measures for the RASFF, detailing the conditions and procedures for the transmission of notifications and supplementary information. The Commission is in the very early stages of consultation on this concept at present, and, to launch the process, has established a small working group of eight Member States which are now examining best practices across Member States. After stakeholder consultation the Document providing a Framework for the Implementing Measures will be an EC Decision, subject to comitology procedure.

The Group also discussed a draft Commission consultation paper on the feasibility of presenting a legislative proposal enabling EFSA to charge fees for processing authorisation files. This draft, which carefully assesses the merits and disadvantages of fees, had been presented to stakeholders in December and amended in light of the comments received. The response of the Group to the paper was mixed, with some parties opposing the fees due to fears concerning the impact of such an initiative on the perceived autonomy of EFSA, and others expressing concern that the fees would be charged in addition to fees imposed by Competent Authorities at national level.

The bulk of discussions were however devoted to Consultative Document on Labelling. The Commission delivered several presentations on nutrition labelling, animal welfare, health warnings on alcohol beverages and country of origin labelling highlighting the main issues for discussion. This meeting was part

of a consultative process with the stakeholders and was meant to facilitate the discussion around labelling issue. R. Madelin chaired the lively debate and concluded by reminding that Commission is looking forward to receive information from stakeholders backed with concrete figures. The dead-line for official responses to DG SANCO paper that was set 16th of June 2006

Environment

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC)

The Commission is currently reviewing the IPPC Directive and has launched six review studies on the various aspects of the IPPC-D implementation. On 23/05, a CIAA delegation attended an Advisory Group meeting, in which the Commission aimed at presenting the progress made by the consultants in their assessment process. Their presentations confirmed that - at the current stage of the review - the food & drink sector is not identified as one of the sectors to carry out case studies.

The issues of major interest for CIAA concern the possibility of linking ELV to "production capacity", the possibility of lowering the threshold for combustion installations from 50 to 20 MW, the reflection about an emissions trading scheme for NOx and SO2 and the screening of overlaps between IPPC and other EU policy measures. In order to identify priorities and views of CIAA members on these aspects, the CIAA Secretariat has drafted a first synthesis of comments received from CIAA members. This preliminary assessment will be frequently updated and further developed to be used for the representation of CIAA interests in the Commission Advisory Group and the UNICE task force.

Trade

EU/Latin America - The only concrete breakthrough of the fourth EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit, which was held in Vienna on 12/05, launched the negotiations for an EU-Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador) association, including free-trade, agreement. The agreement could enter into force before 2010. Regarding Mercosur, negotiations

for a bi-regional agreement did not progress. Finally, there was also no significant and expected move regarding the launch of an EU/Andean Community agreement, due notably to the lack of Andean regional integration.

OECD - High-level officials met on 23-24/05 at the OECD in Paris, including WTO Director General Pascal Lamy, Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and US Trade Representative Rob Portman. Although no substantial progress in current Doha Round negotiations has been reported, the meeting is

expected to serve to set the negotiation schedule for the coming weeks.

Foreign Sales Cooperation - The European Commission announced not to re-impose an additional duty of 14 percent on a range of US products on 16/05, as the US Congress passed legislation, which repeals the "grandfather" provision of the American Jobs Creation Act and the ETI Act.

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