

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

On 29 June, the CIAA secretariat held a workshop to present the Benchmarking Report to Commission officials from several Directorates Generals, including DGs Sanco, Enterprise, Agri and Environment. In his introductory address, Michel Coomans, Head of Unit from DG Enterprise, stressed the importance of having a clear assessment of the food and drink industry strengths and weaknesses in order to identify the policy instruments that will support its development and improve its performances. More than 15 officials attended this session in which the four main chapters that address the key drivers of competitiveness in the report, were outlined in some detail. The workshop allowed for questions and open discussion on the different chapters and received overall very positive feedback from participants.

Nutrition Labelling Scheme

On 04/07, CIAA announced to the European Platform for Action on Diet Physical Activity and Health a common Nutrition Labelling Scheme recommended for use by food and drink industries across Europe.

"This labelling recommendation comes as a result of our commitments to the EU Platform to look at how to improve food labels in Europe," said Jean Martin, CIAA President. He added, "even though this is a voluntary recommendation we hope and expect a critical mass of companies to work rapidly towards adoption of the principles behind this system. Achieving healthier lifestyles will require more than food labelling changes, notably efforts by other stakeholders to promote increased physical activity and broadly-based consumer education. However, with this initiative CIAA is making a substantial contribution to helping people make better informed dietary choices."

The CIAA recommendation, which includes front-of-pack and back-of-pack nutrition labelling, is based on a uniform list of nutrients, nutrition information per serving and the introduction of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs). A key element of the system is the consistency of the nutrition information that will be provided to consumers across Europe, on the basis of a common framework that will enable them to easily understand the nutritional content of food and drink products.

The CIAA scheme has been developed in line with the requirements of current EU legislation (Directive 90/496/EC). In the context of the "Better Regulation" initiative of the European Commission CIAA reiterates its request to simplify the Directive as part of its upcoming revision.

Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive

The Commission is currently finalizing its report on the implementation of the PPWD and its impact on the environment and the internal market. The CIAA Secretariat had the opportunity to study the inter-

service-consultation draft of this report, which has been prepared by DG ENV.

The draft report concludes that the PPWD had positive effects on the environment and that the 2008 recycling and recovery targets will remain unchanged well beyond 2008. Regrettably, the draft report deals with internal market aspects of packaging legislation only as a secondary issue. No reference is made to the internal market in the conclusions of the draft report. As a minimum, the draft states that national measures encouraging reuse will always have impacts on the internal market and that the freedom of Member States to introduce such measures has to be balanced with the corresponding market distortions. The report also confirms that no general preference of reusable packaging over recyclable packaging is justified. On prevention, the draft concludes that prevention measures have been of limited success and that any substantial change in packaging consumption can only be achieved through changes in production, consumption and distribution patterns. Prevention was best placed with Member States.

The CIAA Secretariat met with DG ENT and emphasized the importance of strengthening the internal market focus of the draft report. DG ENT indicated it was preparing such comments for submission to DG ENV.

Trade

Non annex I products- The NAI Management Committee did not vote on the Draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation 1043/2005. The Commission explained the reasons for implementing NAI differentiated refunds once more and advised participants that, due to the conclusion of an EU/Croatia bilateral trade agreement (implementation from January 1.2007), the sugar as well as the milk product incorporated in NAI goods will be differentiated. The draft Regulation on exemptions, as circulated on 07/07, will be put to vote on 15/09. No further changes are expected (regarding regular exports, the new text foresees 12

- instead of 20 - consignments for the preceding 2 years).

WTO

Russia WTO accession - Days before the G8 summit in St. Petersburg on 15-17/07, the US and Russia advanced on bilateral talks for Russia's WTO accession. After a decade of negotiations, some issues still need to be resolved, among Russian market access for US agricultural products and protection of intellectual property rights. Russia has completed negotiations with a majority of interested WTO members.

WTO negotiations - A WTO ministerial meeting held on 29/06 did not break the deadlock in Doha Round negotiations. Also the EU apparently indicated to be able to move further on market access, US domestic support cuts were evaluated as insufficient, and developing countries seemed unwilling to move towards lower levels of safeguard measures, special and sensitive products. WTO Director General Pascal Lamy has been asked by negotiating partners to broker a deal between major trading partners. A special meeting of key countries including Brazil, India, China, South Africa is scheduled next Monday at the sidelines of the upcoming G8 Summit in St. Petersburg on 15-17/07.

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