



EHPM to put spotlight on mutual recognition at 2009 Vitafoods International event

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How the new mutual recognition regulation can help break down national trade barriers in the EU is trade organisation EHPM's key talking point for this year's Vitafoods International event.

EHPM said that highlighting this 'user-friendly' tool, which becomes applicable in May, is imperative to raise awareness of the principle of mutual recognition both within the industry and among the different national authorities.

The Regulation is based on the concept of mutual recognition of national rules, which in turn stems from the principle of the free movement of goods guaranteed by the EU treaties. It applies to areas of EU legislation not yet harmonised and set up a compulsory dialogue between member states and companies facing restriction to market access for their products because of national technical rules.

EHPM will give a 30-minute presentation on the Vitafoods International show floor on Thursday May 7 (12:50-13:20), on the topic 'Using the mutual recognition Regulation to help export food supplements to other EU markets'.

"The new Regulation is doubly important in light of the European Commission's recently released opinion that no further harmonisation of bioactive and botanical ingredients used in food and nutritional products is necessary at this stage," said EHPM Director of Regulatory Affairs Lorene Courrege, who will speak at the event. "It means companies may find barriers to trade among different Member States, although ingredients lawfully marketed in one EU member state should, in principle, be accepted in all other EU markets."

She continued: "We have found that across the EU, both within the industry and among the different national authorities, there is not much awareness of the principle of mutual recognition. This Regulation is user-friendly for industry. Its clear description of the legal framework will be a significant help to supplement companies arguing for market access. We have great hope that it will help break down barriers to trade."

The Mutual Recognition Regulation gives a definition of the rights and obligations of both the Member States and the industries. It notably puts the burden of proof on the Member State, as opposed to the industry, when refusing the entry of the product on grounds of safety for example; and states that Member States must set up Product Contact Points, which will provide information to businesses and the various EU national authorities on the



national technical rules that have to be complied with in order to market a product.

It also defines the procedures for companies to follow when facing restrictive 'technical' rules which directly or indirectly ban a product or prevent its placing on the market or require a product modification or withdrawal of a product from the market.

Last year EHPM conducted its first workshop on the issue of free movement of goods – a Free Trade Initiative to help companies better understand the practical application of the mutual recognition principle and encourage its use.

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

1. The European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers (EHPM) was created in 1975, working to provide consumers with safe, science-based, high quality products as well as accurate and helpful information about their nutritional value and use.
2. To contact EHPM email lorenecourrege@ehpm.be, tel + (32) 2 209 11, or visit www.ehpm.org