



Brussels, 23rd March 2009
TFL2009.013 CT.2

Ms. Androulla VASSILIOU
Commissioner for Health
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Re: Fruit and vegetable sector calls for continuation of support for Minor Uses

Dear Commissioner Vassiliou,

Our associations, AREFLH, FRESHFEL and OEITFL, representing the European fruit and vegetable sector would like to draw your attention to our concerns regarding the support given by DG SANCO to Minor Uses within the framework of pesticides.

In recent years, meetings of experts from Member States have been organised by DG SANCO in order to exchange information on Minor Uses. These meetings provided a forum to facilitate the search for solutions for Minor Uses for the completion of dossiers for requests for authorisations of active substances. The forum is necessary to ensure that a range of crop protection solutions is maintained in the minor crop sector. A sector, which by merit of its size, is less economically attractive to crop protection companies than mainstream crops.

To our great concern Member States were recently informed, by DG SANCO services, that the Minor Use meetings will no longer take place due to other and more pressing priorities. The news represents a serious setback for minor crops and the Minor Uses dossier, for which the collaboration had been proving very efficient in the finding solutions. The fruit and vegetable sector stress the need for the working groups to continue their activity with the financial support of the Commission.

Furthermore we are astonished that DG SANCO chose to cancel the work dedicated to Minor Uses when the new *Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market* provides that the Commission will present a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the establishment of a European fund for Minor Uses. The need for support for Minor Uses is clearly reflected in the regulation; however the signal given by the Commission is that Minor Uses are not considered a priority.

Equally, the zonal authorization - foreseen in the above-mentioned new regulation - which may ease the pressure in the search of solutions for Minor Uses, will only see its first effects as of 2014-15.

In this context we kindly request DG SANCO to ensure that the support for the Minor Uses working groups is re-established so that the fruitful collaboration to assist Minor Uses can continue. For your information, a similar letter has been sent to Commissioner Fischer Boel and her services.

Yours sincerely,



Susanne Meyer
OEITFL



Jacques Dasque
AREFLH



Philippe Binard
General Delegate Freshfel