

Brussels, 13 September 2017

Joint Statement on alleged “dual quality” of food products

In his State of the Union address, Commission President Juncker said he "cannot accept inferior food for consumers" in certain markets - we fully agree. Practices which are not in line with existing EU legislation, if any, should be clearly addressed. We therefore welcome the Commission's commitment to improve and harmonise testing methodologies and we look forward to the establishment of a multi-stakeholder dialogue to assess and address the perceptions that exist in some Member States.

At the same time, it must be underlined that, to date, the Commission itself has acknowledged that no evidence of widespread 'dual' (east-west) or 'inferior' quality has been found.

Differences in the composition of products does not equal 'dual' or 'inferior' quality per se. Companies consider all consumers equally important and are working hard every day to provide consistent and steady high quality products, taking into account taste preferences, the availability of and preference for locally sourced ingredients, etc. In most cases, differences between recipes exist in different countries - and not specifically between eastern and western EU Member States - to allow for these preferences.

We look forward to continue the collaboration with the Commission and other stakeholders on the basis of facts and evidence, as we wish to avoid the issue from being further marred by politics.

Note to the editors:

FoodDrinkEurope is the organisation of Europe's food and drink industry, the largest manufacturing sector and leading employer in the EU and a key contributor to its economy (286 000 companies, 99% SMEs, 4.2 million employees).

AIM is the European Brands Association. AIM's membership comprises corporate members and national associations that have a similar but more local constituency. Altogether, AIM represents directly or indirectly some 1,800 companies ranging from SMEs to multinationals, accounting for some €653 billion annual sales and two million jobs in Europe alone. Members are manufacturers of branded consumer products that are united in their purpose to build strong, evocative brands and as such place the consumer at the heart of what they do. AIM's 48 corporate members alone invest €14 billion annually in R&D in Europe.

AIM's mission is to create for brands an environment of fair and vigorous competition, fostering innovation and guaranteeing maximum value to consumers now and for generations to come.

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