

## **European Public Health Alliance**

I write on behalf of the European Public Health Alliance to express an interest in your recent discussion paper (SANCO/1341/2001), and our regrets that we have not been able to give it proper consideration in advance of tomorrow's deadline for comments. We shall do our best to provide a more considered and detailed response early in the autumn, in the hope that this may still be of some value during the drafting of any Commission proposal.

There is just one point of principle that we wish to strongly underline at this stage, namely whether or not health claims should be attached to foodstuffs. In principle, we believe that this should not be the case. It is scarcely credible that the consumption of any one food product, on its own, could promote better health or (even less likely) protect against specific disease.

It is true that diet has a major impact on health. A balanced, nutritious diet can contribute to our general sense of health and well-being; and a poor diet can do just the reverse. But this relates to our overall eating patterns, not to the cause/effect consequence of eating just one product.

There is another risk if health claims are allowed to refer to foods: the line between foodstuffs and medicines becomes blurred, creating confusion for consumers and uneven competition between food and medicines retailers. To safeguard everyone's interests, we believe that the legal framework for the labelling and promotion of these two types of product should be kept separate.

I am sorry that we have not been able to provide a more detailed comment at this stage. Thank you for your consideration.

With best wishes.

Andrew Hayes, President, European Public Health Alliance  
Andrew Hayes  
EU Liaison Officer  
UICC / ECL EU Liaison Office  
33 rue De Pascale

1040 Brussels (Belgium)  
e-mail: [hayes@globalink.org](mailto:hayes@globalink.org)  
Tel +32 2 230.20.27.  
Fax +32 2 231.18.58.