

Statement included in the minutes of the Scientific Committee on Food in relation to the contamination of pomace oils (olive residue oils) with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (adopted during the SCF plenary meeting of 10/11 July 2001).

The Commission services gave an update on the status regarding the present case of pomace oils (olive residue oils) contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) at levels up to 1700 micrograms/kg (sum of 14 PAH measured).

The Committee was requested to give a preliminary evaluation of the situation in view of possible acute toxic effects.

The toxicity /carcinogenicity of PAH has been reviewed in recent years (WHO 1998). The main concern of human exposure to PAH via food is the carcinogenic potential of several members of the group of PAH. The occurrence of a carcinogenic effect usually requires long-term exposure to PAH. Single or repeated doses of PAH have a moderate to low toxicity for effects other than carcinogenicity. The Committee noted that, based on the highest reported contamination levels and a daily pomace oil intake of 15 to 50 g per person, the intake of PAH from contaminated pomace oils would be in the range of 500 -1500 nanograms PAH/kg bw/day. This intake is several orders of magnitude lower than doses leading to acute toxic effects.

Following a recent request by the Commission services the Committee is establishing an *ad hoc* working group, which will embark on a detailed assessment of the risks related to dietary exposure to PAH.