



October 31, 2012

Daniel Mullaney
Asst. U.S. Trade Rep. for Europe and the Middle East
Office of the Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

RE: Promoting U.S.-EU Regulatory Compatibility [Docket No. USTR–2012–0028, 77 Fed. Reg. 59702, Sept. 28, 2012]

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) learned the U.S. is considering discussions with the European Union that may involve standards covered under the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) during upcoming meetings of the High-Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth. CSPI is a nonprofit health advocacy and education organization focused on food safety, nutrition, and alcohol issues. CSPI is supported principally by the 850,000 subscribers to its *Nutrition Action HealthLetter* in the United States and Canada and by foundation grants. We accept no government or industry funding.

Harmonization of standards can be valuable, but not if it subordinates consumer safety to trade promotion interests. CSPI has played an active role in SPS standard setting through its participation in CODEX Alimentarius under the flag of the International Association of Consumer Food Organizations (IACFO). We are also members of the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), which coordinates between consumer organizations in the U.S. and EU. It is critically important that any discussion include public health considerations through inclusion of civil society organizations like CSPI, IACFO and TACD. This is especially critical when considering the public health consequences of possible changes to SPS standards.

Although IACFO and TACD and member organizations like CSPI have been working on the issues of food safety, nutrition, and food labeling standards (including the use of drugs in animal agriculture systems) for over a decade, the U.S.-EU High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Forum (HLRCF) process has not provided consumer organizations with a place in its discussions.

Therefore, in response to the Federal Register notice of Sept. 28, we request inclusion in HLRCF discussions on any changes affecting SPS standards and subsequent trade agreements. We believe inclusion of domestic and international consumer organizations is a critical step the U.S. and EU can take to address horizontal and/or sectoral differences and assess the effects of various regulatory compatibility proposals.

Attached are our views on areas where greater regulatory compatibility, consistent with the SPS, between the U.S. and EU may serve the interests of consumers and the promotion of fair trade practices.

Sincerely,


Caroline Smith DeWaal
Food Safety Director

CSD/dwp

Attachments (1)

cc: David Weiner, Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Europe