

PRESS RELEASE

GET CONNECTED TO THE FORUM, ENGAGE YOURSELF EFFECTIVELY

FORUM Malta fl-Ewropa's first Information and Consultation Seminar on EU Developments Relating to Controls on Food Additives, Food Flavourings and Enzymes

Besides being the first in a series of seminars and events that *FORUM Malta fl-Ewropa* has scheduled for stakeholders across various sectors, today's seminar also happened to be the first seminar organised since the restructuring of the team at FORUM, with Dr Gabriella Pace at the helm as CEO of the organisation as of the 1st of September, 2006.

The beginning of this month signified for the FORUM Malta fl-Ewropa the birth of an organisation with an increase in human resources, and which can now provide an enhanced service to the Maltese public, NGOs and the business community, not only at constituted body level, but even, and more importantly, at individual firm level.

The FORUM and its Information, Consultation and Funding teams promise to continue forging ahead in their endeavours to ensure that any opportunities and added value accruing from Malta' membership to the EU are maximised upon.

Today's seminar opening address was delivered by FORUM's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Gabriella Pace, who in her opening remarks stressed the role which FORUM will be taking up as a direct link to the European institutions, the Maltese Permanent Representation in Brussels and to various other Maltese officials, on all policy and funding issues affecting Maltese business interests. Dr. Pace stressed the importance of FORUM's role as an advisory body to stakeholders both on policy developments as well as legislative proposals.

FORUM Malta fl-Ewropa will also play an important role in offering all alike, guidance with regard to funding opportunities. Knowing *what* funding is available for the various sector of trade and industry, *when* to get it and *how* to get it, is of the very essence for a successful outcome.

In her concluding remarks, Dr Pace stressed the importance to all to "Get connected to the FORUM, (*and*) engage yourself effectively", because it is in everyone's interest that the Maltese society at large is involved in consultation sessions. Consultation is at the heart of better regulation. Policy makers must engage openly with a full range of

stakeholders throughout the policy-making process, considering their views and acting on the evidence they produce, if the pipeline acquis they will be discussing with their Brussels counterparts are to meet the necessary objective at an acceptable cost to the Maltese economy.

This was the aim of FORUM's first seminar, to bring the EU closer to its people. Today's consultative meeting was aimed at informing Maltese stakeholders on the European Commission's proposed Regulations relating to controls on food additives, food flavourings and food enzymes. The subject was further addressed by Mr Martin Seychell, (*Head of Foodstuffs, Chemicals and Cosmetics Directorate – Malta Standards Authority*), who gave a brief presentation on the subject explaining the four proposed legislations whilst stressing that the Malta Standards Authority will be more than willing to aid stakeholders grasp the proposed EU legislations.

For additives and flavourings, which are already covered by EU legislation, Mr Seychell said that the proposals bring the rules into line with the latest scientific and technological developments and will improve the clarity of the legislation. In the case of additives, amongst others, the Proposal also sets out a re-evaluation system for food additives currently on the EU market, based on risk assessments by the European Food Safety Authority. The labelling rules for food additives sold as such are also updated. With regard to flavourings, definitions are clarified and stricter conditions are also introduced for the use of the term natural when describing flavourings.

Regarding food enzymes, Martin Seychell said that the draft Regulation proposes replacing divergent national legislation with new, harmonised EU rules. Enzymes play an increasingly important role in food production, and can be used as alternatives to chemicals in improving the texture, appearance, nutritional value and flavour of food, as well as helping in certain food production processes.

Martin Seychell stressed that the scope behind the new proposals being put forth by the European Union is to safeguard consumers. To date the EU had never set legislation regarding enzymes, though it must be said that the EU has established a list of approved substances and additives, and a mere inventory on flavourings. Mr Seychell explained how the Commission is willing to take heed of the contributions of producers of food additives, food flavourings and enzymes with the intent of preparing similar lists for additives.

Further documentation regarding the proposed Regulations establishing a common authorisation procedure for food additives, food enzymes and food flavourings is also being attached with this release.

*...Doc A - Information on four new Commission Proposals...
...MSA Presentation...*



Il-Forum Malta fl-Ewropa jniedi l-ewwel minn sensiela ta' konsultazzjonijiet

Il-forum, bhala punt ta' referenza dwar l-UE, iheggeg lill-pubbliku jiehu sehem filkonsultazzjonijiet tieghu

IL-FORUM MALTA FL-EWROPA, FME, l-bierah (Il-Hamis 14 ta' Settembru) nieda l-ewwel laqgħa minn sensiela ta' diversi laqgħat ta' konsultazzjoni pubblika dwar oqsma differenti relatati ma' l-UE. Il-laqgħa tal-bierah trattat s-sustanzi li jintuzaw fl-ikel bhal addittivi, tomghiet u enzymes.

Il-FME ha post ic-Centru Informazzjoni Malta – Unjoni Ewropea (MiC) u l-MUESAC bhala l-ufficju principali li jipprovdi informazzjoni fuq l-UE, jagħmel diversi konsultazzjonijiet dwar setturi differenti kif ukoll dwar programmi ta' fondi finanzjarji.

Il-lagħqa ta' konsultazzjoni tal-bierah fethet b'indirizz ta' Gabriella Pace, il-Kap Ezekuttiv tal-Forum, li għaliha dan kien ukoll l-ewwel impenn ufficjali tagħha bhala Kap Ezekuttiv mindu nhatret fl-1 ta' Settembru. Waqt li esprimiet l-impenn tal-FME bhala punt ta' referenza dwar l-UE, appellat lill-pubbliku Malti biex jiehu sehem filkonsultazzjonijiet mnedija mill-forum.

Il-laqgħa kompliet bi prezentazzjoni dwar is-sugget minn Martin Seychell, Direttur fl-Awtorita Maltija ta' l-Istandards, li spjega l-kuntest u l-kontenut ta' erba' proposti għal legislazzjoni għida mahruġa mill-Kummissjoni Ewropea dwar sustanzi li jintuzaw fl-ikel. Intqal li għalkemm f'Malta m'hawnx produttori li jipproducu dawn is-sustanzi dawn il-proposti huma ta' interess għas-settur ta' l-ikel lokali, kemm ta' produzzjoni kif ukoll stabilimenti bhal ristoranti u oħrajn.

Martin Seychell spjega li l-iskop wara dawn il-proposti hu li l-UE tassigura li s-sustanzi uzati fl-ikel ma jkunux ta' hsara għal min jikkunsmhom. Sal-lum l-UE qatt ma llegalat dwar l-enzymes, u waqt li kellha lista ta' sustanzi approvati jew le ta' addittivi, kellha biss inventarju ta' sustanzi ta' toghmiet. Martin Seychell spjega li l-Kummissjoni qed tipproponi li bil-kontribut ta' l-informazzjoni mghoddija mill-produtturi kif ukoll ta' informazzjoni migbura minn testijiet xjentifici fuq dawn is-sustanzi, tkun tista' wkoll tagħmel lista simili għal dik tas-sustanzi addittivi.

Ir-rakkomandazzjoni ta' x'sustanzi għandhom ikunu approvati jew le tinhareg mill-Awtorita Ewropea dwar is-Sigurta fl-Ikel li hi marbuta li tanalizza s-sustanza fi zmien sitt xhur li tasal għandha mingħand il-produttur. Barra minn hekk qed ikun propost ukoll mill-Kummissjoni li d-decizjoni finali għandha tittiehed mill-Kunsill tal-Ministri. B'hekk għandu jonqos iz-zmien stipulat biex tinhareg decizjoni dwar sustanza partikolari u

ghaldaqstant tizzied l-fficjenza. Propost ukoll sistema ahjar ta' labelling dwar is-sustanzi fost l-ohrajn.

L-Awtorita Maltija dwar l-Istandards hi disposta li tassisti u tghin lil kull min ikollu bzonn ta' xi ghajnuna f'dan ir-rigward. Martin Seychell temm li l-Kummissjoni Ewropea, ghalkemm konxja ta' l-ispejjez li jista' jkollhom il-produtturi barranin ta' dawn issustanzi, l-istess Kummissjoni qalet li hu improbabbli li l-intraprizi lokali u l-konsumatur li jaghmlu uzu minn dawn is-sustanzi se jesperjenzaw xi zieda fil-prezzijiet la darba l-ispejjez ikunu minimi meta wiehed jikkunsidra l-kwantita tal-produzzjoni.