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Robust support for the JRC process in alleged dual quality issue

On the occasion of the meeting of the HLFⁱ, which will discuss the issue of alleged dual quality of products, FoodDrinkEurope and AIM urge all participants to support and actively contribute to ensure a well-functioning, collaborative multi-stakeholder dialogue, both at EU and at national level.

The two organisations are fully supportive and actively engaged in the European Commission's fact-based approach, starting with the JRC process which aims to establish robust testing methodologies for pan-European testing of products. Rigorous processes, based on facts, expertise knowledge and exchanges with stakeholders, including all Member States, consumer groups and food chain groups, will ensure a constructive, science-based approach underpins any future policy considerations.

In this context, they reiterate their companies' commitment to provide products of the highest quality across the EU, for all consumers alike. While acknowledging that certain consumers and authorities question why the composition of products sold under the same brand name in different geographies may not be identical, both organisations stress that gaining and maintaining consumer trust and preference is fundamental to their success. Valid reasons exist for differences, including use of locally sourced raw materials, different manufacturing sites, national labelling legislation and diverse consumer preferences.

With this in mind, FoodDrinkEurope and AIM's members commit to continue fostering consumer trust by:

- Offering products of a consistently high quality across the entire EU;
- Providing transparency and clear information about the composition of the products they place on the market;
- Offering their expertise to European and national authorities, by contributing, through the supporting Associations, to the task of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and engaging with national authorities which conduct official tests in a transparent manner ahead of the publication of the results;

Mella Frewen, Director General of FoodDrinkEurope declared: "We look forward to contributing to the work of the JRC in the development of a harmonised testing methodology for food and drink products. This will contribute to more reliable testing and generate comparable results, providing a solid base for further discussion with all stakeholders."

Michelle Gibbons, Director General of AIM, commented: "It is essential that we have an open dialogue with all parties to clarify this issue and show our commitment to quality across the board. Understanding the reasons behind differences is crucial to this end".

Note to the editors:

FoodDrinkEurope is the organization 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. It represents the branded goods industries in Europe on key issues which affect the ability of brand manufacturers to design, distribute and market their brands. AIM's membership groups 1800 companies of all sizes through corporate members and national associations in 22 countries. They employ some two million workers and account for over 650 billion Euro in annual sales in Europe alone.

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ⁱ High Level Forum for a better functioning of the food supply chain