

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Commissioner John Dalli
Head of Cabinet

⇒ Eva
BP.

Brussels, 16 July 2010
CAB D

000563

Dear Ms. Pesonen,

Thank you for your letter dated 24 June 2010 to Commissioner Dalli in which you request a one year extension of the deadline for the existing temporary exemption from compulsory labelling of wines where milk and egg derivatives have been used as fining agents in winemaking.

We would like to recall that the Commission has already, over a period of years and in response to successive rounds of high level discussions, given special consideration to the concerns expressed by the wine sector regarding the labelling of allergens. In particular, in 2003 a transitional period until 25 November 2007 was granted to allow the submission to the Commission of studies proving that a given ingredient derived from allergens is not likely to trigger adverse reactions. Then, in 2007, the wine sector requested and obtained a second transitional period until 31 May 2009 on the basis of the need to adapt the labels to the new rules. Finally, in 2009, the mandatory application of the allergens labelling requirements to the wine sector was postponed for the third time until 31 December 2010 in order to allow a smooth transition to the new labelling rules introduced by the 2008 reform of the common organisation of the market in wine, in the interests of sound administration and to avoid unnecessary burdens on the authorities of the Member States as well as economic operators.

Therefore, a positive answer to your request would represent the fourth time that an exemption from the mandatory application of the allergens labelling requirements is granted in relation to the wine sector.

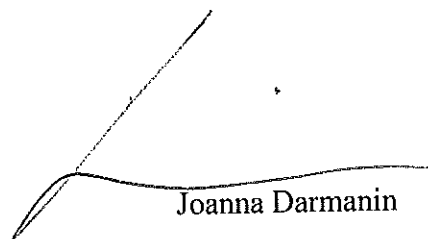
Ms. Pekka Pesonen
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However, we understand the problem of uncertainty posed to the wine sector by the fact that new studies on the allergenicity of casein and albumin used as fining agents in winemaking have now been submitted to the Commission in view of a new assessment of those substances by the European Food Safety Authority. We certainly appreciate the efforts of the wine sector to ensure the provision of relevant and accurate science-based information to consumers. We can assure you that the Commission's services will follow carefully the procedure laid down in Article 6(11) of Directive 2000/13/EC¹ in order to evaluate the appropriateness of an update of the list in Annex IIIa.

Against this background we will explore the possibility of an ultimate extension of the deadline for the mandatory application of allergens labelling requirements.

Yours sincerely,



Joanna Darmanin

¹ OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29.