

Brussels, 20. 09. 2006
D(2006)1760

Dear Ms Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 2006 concerning Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements.

I appreciate your interest in the setting of maximum levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements. It is indeed a subject on which there are divergent views.

First of all, I would like to emphasise that a balanced and varied diet can provide all necessary nutrients for the normal development and the maintenance of a healthy life in quantities which meet those established and recommended by generally acceptable scientific data. However, I can agree with you that, mainly due to changes in lifestyles, this situation is not achieved by all groups of the population in Europe, and therefore, consumers may choose to supplement their diet through food supplements

The food supplements Directive does not deprive citizens of this possibility of supplementing their diet with vitamins and minerals, on the contrary, it ensures that such supplementation is made with products that are safe and appropriately labelled.

The criteria for establishing the maximum amounts for vitamins and minerals in food supplements are set in Article 5 of the abovementioned Directive. This article foresees that two elements should be considered in this exercise: the intake of vitamin and minerals from the normal diet and the upper safe levels of vitamins and minerals (the maximum level of daily intake judged to be unlikely to pose a risk of adverse effects to humans) that have been established by European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) or by the Scientific Committee on Food (SCF). In addition, due account should also be taken to the reference intakes of these substances of the population, also in order to take into consideration possible deficiencies.

I would draw your attention to the fact that the Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection has published a discussion paper on the setting of maximum and minimum levels of vitamins and minerals in foodstuffs, which you can access via the Europa website:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/supplements/discus_paper_amount_vitamins.pdf

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