

# HEALTH FREEDOM IN THE UK

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As we currently stand in the United Kingdom we do still have a good choice over our health and have the freedom to seek the advice of an alternative health practitioner. We can also walk into any natural health-store and choose to buy good-quality, high-dose vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements and at reasonable prices. There are only three other countries in the European Union where this could also be said.

However, it is worrying that in a couple of years' time this might not still be the case, with the full implementation of the European Union's Food Supplements Directive, which is due to come into effect at the start of 2010. The United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, and the Netherlands will be dragged down to the harshly-restrictive level of control seen in France and Germany.

## Strict Product Licences

Under one of the articles of this Directive, vitamin, mineral, and herbal supplement producers will have to manufacture their products under a strict product licence. And while most practitioners here think that more-stringent manufacturing procedures might reduce even further the risk of contamination and guarantee even higher-quality supplements, the far-more negative side to this part of the Directive would be, among other things, increased manufacturing costs and therefore increased retail costs for consumers.

Importantly, too, we will only see the production of low-concentration supplements at exorbitant prices, manufactured by large corporate giants who can afford the product-licence fee. For those consumers wishing to purchase high-dose supplements (for example, 1000 mg Vitamin C), they will only be available – if at all – by prescription only, which, when that does happen, we are not likely to get hold of. Ironically, enough, in this supposed quest for consumer safety, the net result will be *less* consumer safety and *lower* health because consumers will no longer have access to those necessarily higher-dose nutrients that will effectively support their optimal health!

## Absurdly Low Safe Upper Levels

The other and even more-worrying issue about this Directive is its unwillingness to accept the production of vitamin and mineral supplements within true upper safety

levels, but rather at levels far lower than the suggested optimum nutritional allowance (SONA) as is currently the case. Our health will be the victim of this Directive.

Under the new scheme our supplements will be manufactured at levels based purely on a multiple that will be set well below the recommended daily allowances (RDA) and in fact we are seeing this already as one pharmaceutical giant has started producing a Vitamin-C supplement at 10 milligrams, well below the 1000-milligram optimum level!

## Bullying Tactics

Most small natural-health businesses see this as nothing less than bullying tactics by the big giants and ultimately such businesses will be priced out of the market. There are a number of regional groups here that are fighting this legislation, such as the Consumers for Health Choice and the Alliance for Natural Health, now joined by the National Health Federation-UK; and there is a case being brought forward at the Court for Human Rights.

I intend to contact my Member of European Parliament (MEP) as a matter of urgency on this subject. On the 17<sup>th</sup> March, Scott Tips and Ian Crane addressed the Welsh public on the issues of this Directive in particular and of Codex Alimentarius in general. Incidentally, March 17<sup>th</sup> falls as St Patrick's Day and since St Patrick was actually a Welshman, I think it was an appropriate time to wake-up Wales to these issues and launch our NHF in the United Kingdom! Now that NHF is here, look for more action on several fronts vital to our health. And join the NHF-UK to help us advance health freedom here in the United Kingdom. 



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