

## PRESS RELEASE

17 April 2019

### GIVE US OUR HEMP BACK!

**Brussels, 17 April 2019** – The recent change in the Novel Food Catalogue, which is not a binding document, brought many negative consequences on the EU industrial hemp sector. Even if hemp extracts are not formally and legally forbidden by Europe, disproportionate and senseless measures have been taken against food products containing CBD in many European countries. In reaction to incorrect and misleading information in the media, EIHA prepared a Press Note to provide a clear and factual overview of the current legislative framework of hemp extracts in Europe.

*Background* - Without industry consultation, the wording of the Novel Food catalogue was changed in January 2019. As a result, and according to the Novel Food Catalogue today:

- only **seed** derived products are considered food,
- **leaves** and **flowers** are now considered not explicitly exempted from the scope of Novel Food (Regulation (EU) 2015/2283) which has moved them from previously foods into a 'grey zone', and
- a new entry, called Cannabinoids, was created which now states that all **hemp extracts** are novel food.

This unnecessary, illogical and illicit change of the former Novel Food entry is unacceptable for EIHA members and the entire European hemp industry. Back in 1998, the hemp industry received written confirmation from the EU (PAFF Standing Committee) that hemp flowers/leaves are permitted for food use, because hemp has been in the human food chain for millennia and it is disingenuous to argue that leaves and flowers in food are novel today. Based on this decision, FBOs made investments in the hemp sector that should be paid-back today instead of being hindered by governments and decision-makers across Europe. Why is a food that was confirmed lawful 20 years ago, suddenly no longer legal today?

EIHA reiterate that CBD is a natural component of the hemp plant that has been extracted and used in the human diet for centuries. Therefore the position of EIHA is that leaves, flowers and hemp extracts are food, which means no authorisation is required to market hemp derived products. This approach only refers to natural food products in which the amount of Cannabidiol (CBD) does not exceed the natural amount present in the plant which was the guidelines as per the previous Novel Food catalogue entry and valid for years up to January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Following the latest developments in Germany (BVL statement on CBD, 20/03/2019), Spain, Portugal and Eastern Countries, EIHA Board Member, Catherine Wilson stated *“Until three months ago we operated lawful businesses compliant with the novel food catalogue. Through the new wording and hostile enforcement actions hemp businesses are suddenly treated like criminals by some countries.”*

Lorenza Romanese, EIHA Managing Director stated that *“I hope Member States and the Commission will urgently act in favour of the consumers and the single market as well as the environment. I urge them to support the EU hemp sector. The sector needs a clear and stable regulatory framework which protects consumers and allows hemp businesses to fully develop. The current situation is jeopardising the European hemp industry and also the investments into R&D of health-promoting and environmentally responsible products.”*