



## HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,  
Executive Director

**O**n February 18, HFMA representatives attended an important event hosted in the European Parliament by our European federation, EHPM: 'Food supplements for healthier citizens and a stronger economy in the EU'. This presented the opportunity for EHPM officers to engage with EU Parliamentarians, Commission officials and industry stakeholders, especially at the beginning of a new EU legislative term.

This event was very well attended, with over 80 people in the room and standing room only and was hosted by EHPM, together with MEP Simona Bonafè (S&D, Italy) and MEP Pascal Arimont (EPP, Belgium). A wide range of stakeholders was invited to discuss the challenges and opportunities for food supplements in health promotion and disease prevention. MEP Pascal Arimont opened the discussion, calling for a better regulatory environment that supports economic growth, cross-border trade and innovation in the food supplements sector. To this end, he encouraged stakeholders to work together on an ambitious strategy that would ensure that consumers have access to safe and high-quality products and that levels the playing field for European SMEs.

Echoing the need for a stable legislative environment for the food supplements sector, EHPM's Chair, Michel Horn, and EHPM's

## Our industry's voice in Brussels



Director General, Livia Menichetti, presented the EHPM's new Manifesto for a healthy, innovative and prosperous Europe. The document outlines EHPM's vision for healthier citizens and a stronger economy in Europe and calls on the EU to promote an enabling environment for businesses to innovate and be more competitive. It pledges for safety, quality, sustainability and transparency for consumers as key priority areas for the sector for the coming years. To help achieve these goals, EHPM will be updating its Quality Guide alongside a nutriviigilance system accepted by all companies in the food supplements sector.

The first panel discussion of the event focused on the health benefits of food supplements and their positive impact on reducing the risk of developing certain diseases. The panel brought together a diverse set of speakers, including Wolfgang Gelbmann, Senior Scientific Officer at the Department of Nutrition at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Floriana Cimmarusti, Secretary General at SAFE Food Advocacy Europe, Matteo Pirro, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of Perugia, and Nicolas Cappelaere, Board Member at the French National Union of Food Supplements, Synadiet.

There was broad consensus on



the potential of food supplements in improving health, and also agreement on the important role food supplements have in reducing the current pressure on EU's healthcare systems, brought along by an ageing European population. In addition to reducing the risk factor for the development of certain diseases, food supplements could also have a significant positive impact on our welfare systems through supporting healthy ageing. This could free up a significant portion of Member States' budgets currently financing healthcare systems.

The second panel discussion focused on relevant EU political priorities and how the food supplements sector can stimulate growth in the EU economy. The panel brought together policymakers and industry representatives, including Yvette Azzopardi, Legislative Officer at DG SANTE at the European Commission, Alban Maggiar, President at SMEunited, and Alessia Cogliandro, European Affairs Manager at supplement

maker, Aboca.

The panellists reiterated the need for transparency across the entire supply chain, and Yvette Azzopardi encouraged everyone to take part in the upcoming stakeholder consultation on the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy. Panellists also discussed that a key part of a better legislative environment for the food supplements sector is promoting innovation. However, without clear rules for product approvals and the use of health claims, businesses are unlikely to invest in product development.

Looking ahead, panellists also highlighted the role of the food supplements sector in contributing to the European Commission's priorities, notably the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Green Deal, with the aim to stimulate healthy food for all alongside sustainable food production.

The event served as an important starting point for a closer cooperation between policymakers, consumer organisations, the industry and other relevant stakeholders for a better legislative environment for the food supplements sector. A cooperation that is built on a shared objective to promote a healthy, innovative and prosperous Europe.

For HFMA's part, I'm pleased to say that in recent correspondence, the EHPM has reaffirmed its commitment to the HFMA post-Brexit, and we are very happy to remain an active member of the organisation we played a major part in creating over 40 years ago. hfb



**To help us in our efforts to protect this industry and benefit from the gold-standard advice we provide, join the HFMA at the earliest opportunity. To learn more about our activities, please contact me at [graham@hfma.co.uk](mailto:graham@hfma.co.uk)**

**HFMA membership is vital to ensure that your company keeps abreast of the fast-changing regulatory environment. The HFMA is the UK's best source of information and most effective defender of our industry's interests. To help the HFMA defend your business at this most critical time contact [hfma@hfma.co.uk](mailto:hfma@hfma.co.uk) or call 020 8481 7100.**

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