

## Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries



Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou  
The European Commission  
DG Health and Consumer Protection  
B-1049 BRUSSELS  
Belgium

Copenhagen, 16 JULI 2008  
No.: 11344

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to you to call your attention to a matter, which has general European policy implications, and is of great importance to Denmark.

In March this year, EFSA published an opinion on azo-dyes, evaluating the findings of the so called Southampton study, stating that in the context of the overall weight of evidence and in view of the considerable uncertainties, the Panel concludes that the findings of the study cannot be used as a basis for altering the ADI of the respective food colours or sodium benzoate.

The issue has been subject to considerable public attention in Denmark due to the potential risk for the children in particular. Therefore, I would like to state my opinion that the azo-dyes should be banned within the Community if there is any doubt as to their safe use in food products.

In this context, I would like to stress the importance of the re-evaluation of the azo-dyes, which is performed as part of the current re-evaluation of all food additives. In that respect I kindly ask you to confirm that the re-evaluation of the azo-dyes will be completed as planned before the end of 2008.

If the re-evaluation is not conclusive as to the safety of the azo-dyes, I believe it would be appropriate if the Commission took on the responsibility of performing a thorough study of the safety of the dyes.

I thank you for your attention in this matter, and remain at your disposal for any further discussion on this very important matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Eva Kjer Hansen