

Lidl recalls hemp products due to an alleged increased of THC levels

Brussels - Lidl has recalled all hemp products and has warned customers about their consumption, **due to an alleged high-level of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)**. The **European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA) strongly defends consumers' protection and safety, but regrets this decision based on inaccurate guideline values.**

Among the products that have been cleared from the shelves of the German retailer there is **hemp seed oil**, which far from being dangerous to consumers' health, is safe and full of nutritious properties. Daniel Kruse, President of the European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA), states: "**Hemp seed oil is a safe and popular oil among consumers containing valuable omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.** The review will show that **this hemp seed oil is marketable and does not have any intoxicating effects.** Moreover, it should be clarified that, when talking about THC, **only a high intake of delta-9 THC can have intoxicating effects**, while the so-called THCA, the THC acid, has no intoxicating effect at all."

In Germany there is currently **no defined limit value for THC intake from food**. The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has so far only provided unnecessarily low guideline values for ready-to-eat products. In the case of hemp seed oil, this value is **5mg/kg total THC** - i.e., the above-mentioned non-intoxicating THC acid plus the psychoactive delta-9-THC. It should also be highlighted that **guideline values may be exceeded by a factor of two before the marketability could be restricted**. The BfR, by referring to the recommended intake value of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), has done a disservice not only to hemp sector in general, but also to trade and consumers. **This outdated intake value (0,001 mg per kg bodyweight) refers exclusively to delta-9-THC**. However, it needs to be stated that, even based on this outdated recommendation value, nothing stands in the way of the marketability and product safety of such hemp seed oil.

For decades, and as stated in previous position papers¹, **EIHA has been advocating for a harmonised and scientifically-based approach on THC levels in food at EU level**. According to EIHA's position, EFSA's limit values are extremely strict and outdated. It is expected that in the fourth quarter of 2021, the European Commission will finally adopt binding limits for THC in foodstuffs all over Europe, including **7.5 mg/kg total THC for hemp seed oil**; with the measurement tolerance, this value would be at a maximum permissible of 10.8 mg/kg. In practical terms, this would mean that, **after two decades, we would finally have in the EU the approximate levels that for a long time have been applicable in North America, Australia, and other countries** - Switzerland, for instance, has had for years a scientifically based limit of 20 mg/kg total THC.

"**We urgently need these limit values in Europe.** Today, operators are facing regulatory divergence across Member States that do have a negative impact on their businesses by hindering the trade of these products. What the sector needs the most is legal certainty based on recent studies. **We should precisely put consumers first by offering them crystal clear information and transparency on what they are buying.**" says Lorenza Romanese, EIHA Managing Director.

¹ See <https://eiha.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/EIHA-contribution-on-THC-maximum-levels-in-food-1-5.pdf>

To conclude, Mr Kruse, EIHA President, adds “I am sure that one day – hopefully soon – it will be completely normal to buy hemp products in every supermarket in Germany and all over Europe, just as it happens in the USA and Canada. **There is simply no scientific reason to withhold these high-quality food products from consumers.**”

About the European Industrial Hemp Association

The **European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA)** represents the common interests of hemp farmers, producers and traders working with hemp fibres, shives, seeds, leaves and cannabinoids. Our main task is to serve, protect and represent the hemp sector in the EU and international policy-making.

EIHA covers different areas for the application of hemp, namely its use for **construction** materials, **textiles**, **cosmetics**, **feed**, **food**, and **supplements**.

More at: www.eiha.org

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