



Ref JMU/02200439/gol

Mr. Antonios TRAKATELLIS,
Chairman STOA

12th February 2004

Dear Mr Trakatellis,

We note with concern that the STOA panel has apparently voted against the publication of a STOA report on inedibles in food.

We accept of course that the STOA panel has certain responsibilities regarding the quality of published reports but it seems to us that there is a procedure in the STOA rules for dealing with questions of quality when they arise.

I refer in particular to Article 3.5 of the STOA rules which, as you know, read as follows:

The STOA Panel may, if it deems it necessary, have a project subjected to an evaluation or review by independent external scientists. In the light of such evaluation or review the Panel may decide to withhold publication. If it proceeds with publication, the evaluation or review may be published with the project findings.

According to reports from some of your colleagues in the Parliament, this report was indeed submitted to review by independent scientists and approved, with one dissenting voice, by a majority of the scientists involved.

If this is indeed the case we would worry that the panel may have been guided by considerations other than quality in deciding against publication.

We would also ask whether it is correct or appropriate for the panel to refuse publication when a report is approved by independent scientists appointed to assess quality in accordance with the STOA rules.

We would be grateful if you would respond to the concerns expressed above.

We write on behalf of BEUC the European Consumers Organisation and ANEC the European Association for the Participation of Consumers in Standardisation. We would add that we were invited to send representatives to a Steering Group for this project. Apart from an initial meeting of the group we have heard nothing more since.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Murray
Director BEUC

Dr. Gottlobe Fabisch,
Secretary-General ANEC